



OBAMA PARDONS  
TURKEYS AS PART  
OF ANNUAL RITE



Page 2

LIGHTING UP THE  
CHRISTMAS CHEER  
AT PALAIS HINDU



Page 13



## Stuff for which we are thankful

**Ken Herman**

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**AUSTIN, Texas** -- Once again, Thanksgiving rolls around at a time when many of us have much for which to be thankful.

I'm thankful for endless TV football on Thanksgiving. If you're in that category, here's a piece of advice: Sometime tomorrow while tunnel-visioning on football take time out to say something nonfootballly to a non-football fan in the room, preferably not something like, "Hey, I'm still hungry."

I'm thankful for recently passing one of life's most underappreciated birthdays. I'm now 59 1/2, putting me in that once-in-a-lifetime six-month sweet spot during which I'm under 60 but can make withdrawals from my 401(K) without a 10 percent penalty. Anybody ever see a "Happy 59 1/2 Birthday" card?

And I'm always thankful for studies that prove the obvious, studies that tell us things like, if it tastes good it's bad for you. In that category is a new one from the National Bureau of Economic Research, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization "dedicated to promoting a greater understanding of how the economy works." Wait a minute, the economy works?

The study was done by Rema Hanna of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Shing-Yi Wang of The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. I'm told those are pretty good schools, though I don't think either of their football teams are on national TV on Thanksgiving. The study is called, "Dishonesty and Selection into Public Service." The researchers, to the shock of perhaps one person on Earth, found that folks with a propensity for dishonesty tend to select themselves for public service.

"In this paper," Hanna and Wang wrote, "we demonstrate that university students who cheat on a simple task in a laboratory setting are more likely to state a preference for entering public service. Importantly, we also show that cheating on this task is predictive of corrupt behavior by real government workers, implying that this measure captures a meaningful propensity towards corruption."

At this point, to save my inbox from inundation from government workers, let me note that this study was done in India, and I'm sure a similar study done around here would show that everybody who goes into public service in these parts is a fine, fine human being.

The researchers based their conclusions, in part, on rolls of a die by 559 Indian college students. The method involved students self-reporting what came up on the die on 42 rolls. The higher the number, the higher the payment they got.

"Dishonesty as measured by the dice task is rampant," the researchers reported, also noting that: "Students who cheated on the dice game were then 6.3 percent more likely to want a government job."

Is this study statistically valid or societally important? Hey, if I knew that, I wouldn't be pecking out columns for a legacy media outlet. With that caveat, some more excerpts:

"We find that students who exhibit lower levels of pro-social behavior are more likely to prefer a government job."

"Overall, we find that dishonest individuals -- as measured by the dice task -- prefer to enter government service."

What then do we do with this information? If people who cheat are more likely to want to become public servants, maybe we shouldn't let anyone who wants to be a public servant become a public servant. This jibes with my long-held notion that anybody who wants to be a prison guard perhaps shouldn't be a prison guard. Maybe we need a draft for prison guards. Have a safe, fun and meaningful holiday weekend. And may all your teams win. □

## Obama pardons Popcorn and Caramel

**JIM KUHNHENN**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** —

President Barack Obama spared two turkeys from the oven Wednesday, fulfilling the annual tradition of a presidential pardon for a couple of lucky birds ahead of the American harvest holiday of Thanksgiving Day.

Obama pardoned Popcorn, who shared the stage with the president on the North Portico of the White House on a cold, drizzly day.

An alternate turkey, named

position in the world, brings with it many awesome and solemn responsibilities," Obama began. "This is not one of them."

Popcorn, the White House said, likes to feed on corn and strut to Beyonce's "Halo," while Caramel prefers soybean meal and Lady Gaga.

Good to know.

Popcorn's victory, Obama said, proves "that even a turkey with a funny name can find a place in politics." As for Caramel, "he's sticking around and he's already busy raising money

was granted by President George H.W. Bush.

Later Wednesday, Obama, wife Michelle, daughters Malia and Sasha, and mother-in-law Marian Robinson volunteered at a local charity — the Capitol Area Food Bank — distributing bags of sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, apples and small white boxes of the presidential M&Ms.

Obama said the family also planned to deliver a couple of turkeys to the food bank — these, not spared.

"Tomorrow, as we gather with our own friends and



**President Barack Obama, with daughters Sasha, second from left, and Malia, right, carries on the Thanksgiving tradition of saving Popcorn the turkey from the dinner table with a "presidential pardon," at the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013, as John Burkel, current chairman of the National Turkey Federation in Badger, Minn, stands left.**

(AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

Caramel, also received a pardon, though it did not have the benefit of a face-to-beak meeting with the president.

"The office of the presidency, the most powerful

for his next campaign," the president said.

Presidents have spared turkeys off and on as far back as the Lincoln era, according to the White House. The first official pardon

family," Obama said on a serious note, "we'll count ourselves lucky that there's more to be thankful for than we can ever say and more to be hopeful for than we can ever imagine." □

## Storms upends East Coast holiday travel

**JASON KEYSER**

**Associated Press**

**CHICAGO (AP)** —

Bands of ice, sleet and rain were upending some Thanksgiving holiday plans as millions of Americans took to the roads, skies and rails Wednesday, likely the busiest travel day of the year.

So far, the storms barreling over the mid-Atlantic and Northeast have not sent widespread flight delays or

cancellations rippling beyond the region to other parts of the nation's air network.

As of early Wednesday, about 200 flights to, from or within the United States had been canceled, according to the air tracking website FlightAware.com. Most of the scrapped flights were in or out of three major Northeast hubs: Newark Liberty International in New

Jersey, Philadelphia International and LaGuardia in New York City.

More than 43 million people are travelling over the long holiday weekend, according to AAA, a federation of motor clubs in the U.S. and Canada. About 39 million of those will be on the roads, while more than 3 million people are expected to filter through airports. □



## Q&A ON THE NEWS

**Q:** The movie "The Exorcist" has been on TV several times the past several weeks. I've heard this movie was based on a true story. Is that true?

-- **Ralph Williams, Lavonia, Ga.**

**A:** The movie, released in 1973, was based on William Peter Blatty's best-selling book of the same name, which was published in 1971. The book was inspired by the 1949 exorcism of Roland Doe, a pseudonym for a 14-year-old boy who lived in Missouri. The real case "gave me the idea, nothing more," Blatty once told The Washington Post. Doe's possession began after the death of his Aunt Harriett, a spiritualist. Strange noises and happenings began to occur, and the boy's parents turned to Catholic priests. Among them was Father Raymond Bishop, who recorded in a diary odd events, including several violent episodes that injured both Doe and priests. The exorcism occurred over a three-month period in both Missouri and Maryland, where the family had previously lived, ending on April 18, 1949. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the movie.

**Q:** What became of Campbell Brown, who left NBC for CNN and then left that network?

-- **S. Lloyd Martin, Decatur, Ga.**

**A:** Brown, a former reporter and anchor for NBC and CNN, is the co-founder of New York's The Parents' Transparency Project, "a watchdog group whose mission is to bring transparency to the rules, deals and contracts negotiated between our state and local governments and the teachers' unions," according to its website (ParentsTransparency.org). Brown also is on the organization's board of directors. Brown, 45, has two children and lives in Manhattan. Brown, who has a website (CampbellBrown.com) and is active on Twitter, left CNN in 2010.

**Q:** Does the U.S. Postal Service have tracking devices on its vehicles like UPS and FedEx? If not, why?

-- **Al Cooper, Atlanta**

**A:** There are no tracking devices on USPS vehicles, spokesman Michael Miles told Q-and-A on the News in an email. "The Postal Service has more vehicles than both UPS and FedEx combined, so equipping each of them with tracking devices would not be practical," Miles wrote. "Also, unlike its competitors, many postal deliveries are made on foot."

**Q:** As a follow-up a recent answer, which states receive the most food stamp support as a percentage? Being a native Californian, I think that state's percentage would be about 10 percent of the population. But if Georgia has 9 million people, that is really almost 25 percent.

-- **Thomas E. Davies, Atlanta**

**A:** Mississippi, at 22 percent (659,872 out of a population of 2.9 million), was the state with the largest part of its population receiving food stamps, according to data from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and U.S. Census Bureau prior to recent cuts to the program. The top seven includes: Oregon (21 percent, 815,221 out of 3.9 million), New Mexico (21 percent, 438,252 out of 2.1 million), Louisiana (21 percent, 948,758 out of 4.6 million), Tennessee (20 percent, 1.3 million out of 6.4 million), Kentucky (20 percent, 849,248 out of 4.3 million) and Georgia (19 percent, 1.9 million out of 9.9 million). California was at 11 percent, or 4.1 million out of 38 million. □



A crowd watches as Snoopy and other balloons are inflated for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York, Nov. 27, 2013. Stormy weather may force the withdrawal of the largest balloons in the parade, but for now they are being prepped in hopes of calmer skies.

(Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times)

## Macy's tradition up in the air:

## Floats take shape; flight remains iffy

**MARC SANTORA**  
**SARAH MASLIN NIR**  
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**NEW YORK** - Felix the Cat once caught fire. Bullwinkle sprung a leak, spewing a blast of helium from his nose yards from the finish line. And giant M&M's, Sonic the Hedgehog and SpongeBob SquarePants have all crashed into objects on the street.

But only once in the 87-year history of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade has bad weather grounded the towering balloons that float through the streets of Manhattan on the holiday.

Now, a storm bearing down on the East Coast is once again placing the fate of the balloons in doubt.

The balloons can rise as

high as five stories and can be difficult to control in wind.

After a Cat in the Hat balloon hit a lamp post in 1997, knocking a portion down and injuring four spectators, city officials instituted strict wind guidelines.

If the wind blows at 23 mph or more and gusts reach 34 mph, SpongeBob and the biggest of his inflatable brethren will be grounded. The decision will be made Thursday morning by several agencies.

Joe Picca, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service, said, "What we are seeing right now is that at about 7 a.m. winds will be out of the west-northwest at about 25 miles per hour, but gusts could be as high as 40 miles per hour."

Picca continued, "But we expect the winds to be on a downward trend as the day goes on."

He noted that a challenge in forecasting winds in New York City had to do with the "canyon effect," with the tall buildings along the parade route creating a tunnel.

Historically, the blocks near Times Square have been particularly difficult for the balloons' handlers, with the open area allowing winds to whip with added force.

Regardless of the big balloons' inclusion, the parade is to begin at 9 a.m. As a steady rain fell, workers readied for the night-long ritual of inflating the balloons.

"It says to me that balloons are flying," said Jennifer George, 54, a designer and author who has lived here for 22 years.

But if the wind howls as predicted, they will not be paraded. The balloons will be unzipped and deflated, folded up and sent back to New Jersey.

The last time the balloons were grounded was in 1971, because of foul weather.

The only other reason the balloons did not fly was World War II, when the entire parade was canceled for several years. □



Workers spread out the Ronald McDonald balloon before inflating it at a marshaling area for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York, Nov. 27, 2013.

(Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times)



# Advocates press White house to act on immigration



President Barack Obama, left, stops his speech and turns around in response to an unidentified man, right, who heckled him about anti-deportation policies, at the Betty Ann Ong Chinese Recreation Center in San Francisco. Advocates are frustrated with the failure of House Republicans to tackle immigration. Increasingly, they're focus is on President Barack Obama. The outside groups are demanding that Obama use his powers as chief executive to stop deportations or provide some relief to many of the 11 million immigrants living here illegally.

(AP Photo/Pablo Monsivais)

**DONNA CASSATA**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)**

— Advocates for immigration reform are demanding that President Barack Obama use his powers as chief executive to stop deportations or provide some relief to many of the 11 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally.

Pro-immigrant groups are frustrated with the failure of the Republican-controlled House of Representatives to tackle immigration, But Obama insists that the nation's laws limit his ability to act unilaterally, even though his administration acted on its own last year to suspend deportations of some immigrants brought illegally into the country as children and more recently decided some relatives of

U.S. service members living here illegally could remain. The administration has also quietly changed the rules for immigrants from Visa Waiver Program countries, people who arrived in the U.S. legally but stayed longer than the 90 days the program allows. Now people from the 37, mostly European, countries in the program who are immediate relatives of U.S. citizens can apply to stay in the United States legally.

The moves stand in sharp contrast to the actions of Obama's Homeland Security Department, which has deported a record 1.47 million people during the president's nearly five years in office, according to internal Immigration and Customs Enforcement data.

Heckling of the president during California appearances Monday underscored the dissatisfaction with the Democratic president, not only over the stalled immigration overhaul but also the administration's policies.

"Stop deportations! Stop deportations!" audience members yelled at Obama during a speech in San Francisco that was interrupted by a young man who said his family has been separated for 19 months.

"Executive order" was the rallying cry at a separate Democratic fundraiser Monday. Obama, the former instructor in constitutional law, responded to the criticism with a brief lesson in the nation's rules.

"If, in fact, I could solve all these problems without passing laws in Congress, then I would do so," Obama told the first group. "But we're also a nation of laws."

That's part of our tradition. And so the easy way out is to try to yell and pretend like I can do something by violating our laws."

House Republican leaders have rejected the Democratic-controlled Senate's comprehensive immigration bill, which passed on a bipartisan vote in June. The far-reaching measure would provide new visa and workplace enforce-

ment programs and billions of dollars for border security, along with a path to citizenship for millions.

Small, stand-alone bills from the House Judiciary Committee have languished for months, and leaders signaled that votes are unlikely in this year's remaining legislative days even though Obama recently embraced the piecemeal approach.

Prospects for immigration legislation in 2014, with congressional elections looming, are slim despite the issue's political drag on the Republicans.

In the 2012 election, Hispanic and Asian Americans went overwhelmingly for Obama and Republican strategists know they need to make some inroads with these groups if they want to take the White House in 2016.

Advocacy groups have been as loud as the California protesters in calling for Obama to act while they maintain pressure on House Republicans with protests and acts of civil disobedience.

"House Republicans are infuriating, and legislation is the permanent solution, and we're going to keep fighting for legislation. But that doesn't let Obama off the hook," Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice, a pro-immigrant group, said Tuesday.

"He continues to be the president who presides over record deportation." What angers the advocacy groups is that many of those deported are immigrants who would qualify for legal status or citizenship under the Senate-passed legislation, which Obama supports.

Traveling with Obama in California, a White House spokesman, Josh Earnest, did not rule out some sort of executive action. That possibility unnerves Republicans who point to Obama's unilateral changes to the health care law, such as delaying some requirements and enrollment deadlines. □

## LING & SONS IGA Super Center Thanksgiving Menu November 28 2013

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Roast pork loin with creamy mushroom sauce  
Southwest turkey paella  
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Smashed fresh yams with maple syrup and pecan nuts  
Rich and creamy potato gratin  
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## OJ lawyers promise more appeals for new trial

**KEN RITTER**  
**Associated Press**

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — A judge denied O.J. Simpson's bid

to 33 years for his conviction on armed robbery, kidnapping and other charges. He was granted parole

botched his 2008 trial and appeals to the Nevada Supreme Court. The hearings included testimony by

Simpson.

In her order released after business hours Tuesday, the judge ruled Simpson "failed to pinpoint significant errors that either alone or combined would have changed the outcome of his case. Additionally, Mr. Simpson has failed to demonstrate significant errors from his appeal."

The lawyer who handled Simpson's trial and appeals, Yale Galanter, faulted Simpson's current attorneys for questioning his work and said he felt vindicated.

"In an effort to capture the spotlight, O.J.'s new legal team created a laundry list of falsehoods and attacked my reputation and integrity without contacting me to get the facts,

review my files or review any of the documented evidence in the case," Galanter said.

Bell faulted Galanter for collecting excessive fees from Simpson and not hiring experts or investigators for his defense, and identified other mistakes. But the judge said none would have made a difference in the outcome.

Simpson, meanwhile, drew blame for asking men to bring guns during the 2007 caper, then denying he knew anyone was armed, and for failing to follow his lawyer's advice not to use force to obtain items he believed were his.

"Mr. Simpson failed to disclose a material fact, the use of guns, to Mr. Galanter," the judge said. □



O.J. Simpson listens during an evidentiary hearing in Clark County District Court, in Las Vegas. A judge in Las Vegas rejected Simpson's bid for a new trial this week, dashing the former football star's bid for freedom based on the claim that his original lawyer botched his armed robbery and kidnapping trial in Las Vegas more than five years ago.

(AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

for a new trial on an armed robbery and kidnapping conviction, ruling Wednesday that the evidence is overwhelming that the former football star "planned, organized and led" a group of armed men in a confrontation with two sports memorabilia dealers six years ago.

Simpson had spent the last six months anxiously awaiting the ruling that he hoped would spring him from the medium-security prison where he has been jailed for five years.

The football Hall of Famer based his appeal on claims of ineffective legal counsel.

Simpson's lawyers vowed Wednesday to keep appealing for his freedom.

"He was disappointed and disheartened, as was his family," lawyer Patricia Palm said of Simpson's reaction to the news. "But we're definitely not giving up."

Simpson, 66, is serving nine

on some convictions in July, but still faces at least four more years in prison.

Simpson was acquitted in 1995 in the stabbing deaths of his ex-wife and her friend after one of the most sensational trials in U.S. history. Simpson's next opportunity for freedom will be in an appeal to the Nevada Supreme Court.

His legal team planned to file a notice of appeal as early as next week with the state's highest court. Palm said they're also preparing a federal court claim that Simpson's fair trial rights were violated.

"He is looking forward to the appeal," Palm said. "We're confident that when we get to the right court we'll get relief because he deserves relief."

The 101-page ruling by Clark County District Court Judge Linda Marie Bell comes after she held five days of hearings earlier this year on claims that Simpson's former lawyer

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*Pumpkin Crab Soup*  
Pumpkin soup served with lump crab, fresh herbs cream and toasted almonds

**Pomegranate Sherbet**  
Refreshing Pomegranate sherbet served with a dash of champagne

**Entrée**  
*Slow Roasted Turkey*  
House-made stuffing, mashed potatoes, sautéed seasonal veggies, candied cranberry, traditional Turkey gravy accompanied by thinly slice Prime Rib

**Dessert**  
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## Ruling on US hot sauce factory raises job worries

**IRWINDALE, California (AP)** — A judge has ordered a plant that produces the popular Sriracha chili sauce to stop emitting annoying odors—a ruling that left some nearby residents worried about a possible loss of jobs at the factory. Judge Robert H. O'Brien on Tuesday ruled in favor of the city of Irwindale, where Sriracha recently relocated, saying sauce maker Huy Fong Foods must stop any operations that could be causing the odors and make unspecified changes to mitigate them. The company had no immediate comment, but a few neighbors interviewed Wednesday dismissed the complaints and worried that jobs might be lost if the plant is forced to close. "I don't want it shut down because I think a lot of people will lose their jobs," said Marta Torres, 47. "In two years it has never smelled as much as now, but I think it's OK."

Torres said the smell wafts into her home late in the day in an area where many of her neighbors like to cook with spices. "It's something you can deal with," she said. "It doesn't bother us." O'Brien's injunction was issued in response to a lawsuit filed on Oct. 21 by Irwindale. It wasn't immediately known if the food company plans to appeal. Phone messages left Wednesday by The Associated Press for Huy Fong Foods and its attorney were not immediately returned. The company has said there is no reason to close the plant now because harvest season and the subsequent grinding of red-hot jalapeno peppers — the key ingredient of the sauce — have passed. As a result, the injunction might not have an immediate impact on the company's production or America's hot sauce sup-

ply as Huy Fong continues its year-round mixing and bottling. The judge acknowledged

and watery eyes to the factory. But he said for residents the odor that could be reasonably inferred to

to the senses warranting consideration as a public nuisance." Some residents said living with the smell is bearable. Randall Acosta, 45, who lives in an apartment complex across the street from the factory, said the scent can be strong sometimes but it makes him hungry. "Why are people complaining about the chili smell when this is an industrial area?" he asked. "There's burning rubber down the street. There are other dangers in this city." The lawsuit could still go to trial, but Irwindale officials would like to see a settlement outside court and do not want to shut down Sriracha altogether, City Attorney Fred Galante told the Los Angeles Times (<http://lat.ms/17SSD2h>). "We're going to try to keep having a conversation with Huy Fong," he said, and find a collaborative way to address the odor problem. □



**This October 2013 photo shows the Huy Fong Foods factory that makes Sriracha chili sauce in Irwindale, Calif. The maker of Sriracha hot sauce is under fire for allegedly fouling the air around its Southern California production site. A judge has ordered the plant to stop emitting annoying odors — a ruling that left some nearby residents worried about a possible loss of jobs at the factory. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)**

there was a lack of credible evidence linking complaints of breathing trouble

be emanating from the facility is "extremely annoying, irritating and offensive

## Dog-doo scofflaws get bagged through DNA testing

**RODRIQUE NGOWI Associated Press BRAINTREE, Massachusetts (AP)** — Apartment and condo managers, dogged by complaints from those who've have experienced the squishy and smelly sensation of stepping onto a pile of dog doo, are turning to DNA testing to identify the culprits who don't clean up after their pets. It's the latest twist in the long-running struggle to keep canine waste off lawns, hallways, elevators and other common areas of animal-friendly community buildings. DNA monitoring has yielded immediate and dramatic results in the Massachusetts condominium community of Devon Wood,

where maintenance staff previously reported seeing, stepping into or driving over several piles of droppings each week on its 350-acre (142-hectare) property. "We initially didn't — for a better part of a month — didn't find any waste, which just floored us," said Barbara Kansky, who manages the 398-unit condo development in the town of Braintree that introduced DNA monitoring in July. Polite reminders, letters and notices had previously failed to convince errant pet owners to observe condo rules requiring them to clean up after their animals, Kansky said. There were problems even after

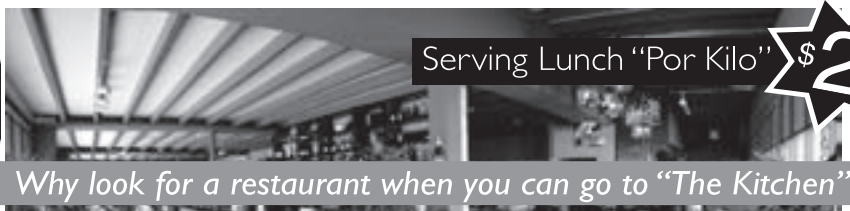
residents reported seeing others failing to pick up their dog's messes. "We would call or send a letter and that dog owner would say: 'Prove it,'" Kansky said. So she searched online and found Knoxville, Tennessee-based BioPet Vet Lab, which specializes in testing DNA from dog poop to identify offending animals. BioPet has beefed up its staff with more scientists to meet demand for what Eric Mayer, director of business development, calls "a booming, growing, new product," and has started distributing throughout the U.S. and into Canada, Israel and Singapore in the past two years. The service, branded Poo-

Prints, is a very simple, Mayer said. The first step is to register the DNA of all dogs in the community by collecting samples of their cheek cells using a pair of sterile swabs, Mayer said in an email. The second is to collect a sample of feces and send it to the lab for matching. An attorney advised Kansky that condo trustees could enforce existing condo rules by requiring all dog owners to submit their animals for collection of DNA samples. Dog owners paid a one-time fee of \$59.95 for the initial DNA testing for the database. Subsequent lab tests of dog droppings that end up identifying the offending animal result in a \$50 test-

ing fee plus a \$100 fine. So far, one resident dog has been identified as an offender. Kerry Weidner, a pet owner in Devon Wood, says the service has transformed life at the sprawling complex. "We used to see dog poop almost every other day. You had to worry about where you walk on the grass because there was dog poop, a lot of different places," Weidner said. "Now, you don't really have to worry about dog poop. You can walk where you want, the grass is now ours again, we don't have to worry about it, and that's just a great thing." Now, Kansky said, residents want her to solve another problem. □

# THE KITCHEN

wood fired grill

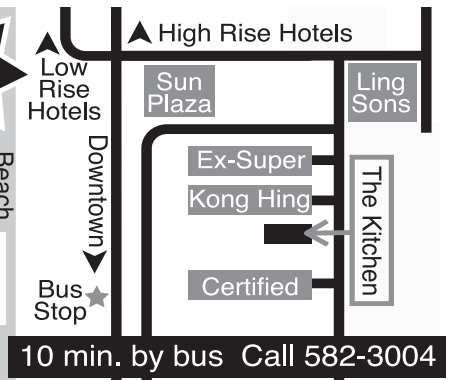


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### US Financial Front:

## In sales quest, stores and online Amazon go head-to-head

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO  
MAE ANDERSON  
AP Retail Writers

**NEW YORK (AP)** — This holiday season, it's Amazon vs. everyone else. The online giant has attracted customers from the likes of Wal-Mart and Best Buy with low prices and convenient shipping. Now, physical stores are fighting

said Danielle, 31, who lives in Washington, D.C. "I don't think so." There's a lot at stake for both sides. Amazon has built a following, but wants to grow its business globally. Meanwhile, brick-and-mortar retailers struggle to keep shoppers from using their stores as showrooms to test out and try on items be-

ing out:

### PRICE WAR

One of Amazon's biggest advantages is its low prices. It can charge less for everything from TVs to T-shirts because it doesn't have the high costs of running physical locations. Last year, some retailers offered to match the lower prices that customers find on websites like Amazon during the holiday season. And this year, more have made this a policy heading into the holiday season. Electronics retailer Best Buy

even is offering to refund the difference if a customer finds a lower price after they purchase something up until Christmas Eve. Staples is among retailers also offering the same discounts online and in stores during the holiday known also Black Friday. "We want customers to be able to shop however they want and whenever they want," said Alison Corcoran, Staples senior vice president.

### SPEEDY DELIVERY

Stores had long seen their

physical locations as an albatross, but now, a growing number are using them to their advantage. "Everybody was telling me ... 'these stores, that's really a liability that you have,'" said Hubert Joly, Best Buy's CEO. "Absolutely not. It's an asset that you have 1,000 warehouses strategically located close to the customers." Best Buy is among the retailers using their locations as distribution hubs from which they can ship goods that customers' order directly to their homes. □



A worker scans bar codes in the book warehouse area at the Amazon.com shipping and receiving facility in Fernley, Nev. Brick-and-mortar retailers like Wal-Mart and Best Buy for years have been contending with Amazon's ruthlessly low prices online. But this holiday season, they're fighting back harder than ever before, matching online prices, opening up on Thanksgiving Day earlier than ever and ramping up shipping options. (AP Photo/Scott Sady)

back and going head-to-head with Amazon as the contest for customers heats up during the busiest shopping period of the year. Stores are doing things like matching the lower prices on Amazon.com and offering the same discounts in stores as on their web sites. For its part, Amazon is giving customers the option to pick up items at physical locations and adding Sunday delivery. The two sides are dueling over shoppers like Jessica Danielle, a speechwriter who plans to do the bulk of her Christmas shopping on Amazon. "All the time spent going to brick-and-mortar stores, is it worth my time?"

fore buying them cheaper on Amazon. The holiday season ups the ante. Both online and traditional retailers can make up to 40 percent of their annual revenue in November and December. And this year, they're competing for the growing number of shoppers who're as comfortable buying online as in stores. Holiday sales are expected to rise 3.9 percent to \$602.1 billion, according to The National Retail Federation. Of that, about \$78.7 billion is expected to be online, up 15 percent from last year, according to Forrester Research. Here's how the fight is play-



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## Dispute over immigration widens between Britain and EU

**ALAN COWELL**

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**LONDON** - A dispute between Britain and the European Union threatened to intensify Wednesday after Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to rewrite the rules governing immigrants' access to state benefits ahead of a possible influx of Romanians and Bulgarians under long-standing European protocols.

Cameron also said he would seek changes to one of the fundamental principles of the 28-nation

bloc - the free movement of people across its internal frontiers - as part of efforts to negotiate what he called a "new settlement" with Europe.

His remarks, seemingly meant to counter right-wing challenges at home and complaints within his own party ranks, drew a sharp riposte from a senior official in Brussels, who accused Britain of "hysteria" and of unilateral actions and rhetoric that risked "presenting the U.K. as the kind of nasty country in the European Union."

"This is an unfortunate overreaction," Laszlo Andor, the EU employment commissioner, told the BBC. "We have been in dialogue with the British authorities in recent years. We always encouraged a fact-based debate about the current movement of workers and the implications, and it seems it is not happening now."

Cameron's remarks seemed likely to create new strains with the European Union if the measures he proposes are seen as discriminatory.

Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007, but the access of their citizens to jobs and residence in some other countries was limited by a three-stage restriction that is to expire Dec. 31.

"We are changing the rules so that no one can come to this country and expect to get out-of-work benefits immediately; we will not pay them for the first three months," Cameron said in the article in The Financial Times.

He also said that new immigrants would not be

able to claim help from the state for housing and that homeless immigrants would be deported.

He added that employers who paid less than the minimum wage could be fined the equivalent of up to \$32,000.

Cameron's suggestions won support from the other party in the coalition, the Liberal Democrats, whose leader, Nick Clegg, called them "sensible and reasonable reforms to ensure that the right to work does not automatically mean the right to claim" benefits. □

## Berlusconi officially expelled from Italian senate

**JIM YARDLEY**

© 2013 New York Times

**ROME** - Having spent months manufacturing procedural delays or conjuring political melodrama, Silvio Berlusconi on Wednesday could no longer stave off the inevitable: Italy's senate stripped him of his parliamentary seat, a dramatic and humiliating expulsion, even as other troubles loom on his horizon.

Berlusconi, 77, the once-powerful former prime minister, is now staring at a cascade of stubborn realities. His removal from the senate means that he is without elective office for the first time in roughly two decades and that he has lost the special immunities awarded to lawmakers. With other legal cases underway against him - and the possibility that new litigation could be filed - Berlusconi is now far more vulnerable than when, as prime minister, he seemed virtually untouchable, battling away sex and corrup-

tion scandals. A billionaire media mogul, he has been deeply concerned about the impact of his legal problems on his business interests.

He also is expected to soon start performing one year of community service for the tax fraud conviction that is the basis of his removal from the senate. Moreover, a court in Milan has ruled that Berlusconi cannot seek any public office for the next two years. For a man who once dominated Italy with a ribald swagger, Berlusconi is suddenly a sharply reduced figure, having recently watched several longtime lieutenants break away from him.

Speaking before a large crowd of flag-waving supporters outside his Rome residence before the senate vote a few blocks away, Berlusconi declared: "It is a bitter day, a day of mourning for democracy." Berlusconi's undisputed reign as leader of Italy's powerful center-right po-

litical movement was dealt a crippling blow in July when the country's highest court upheld a prison term against him on the tax

when his party's unity ruptured.

Berlusconi's longtime protégé, Angelino Alfano, announced Nov. 15 that he

Forza Italia (or Go Italy). Instead, Alfano formed the New Center-Right, attracting many lawmakers in Parliament who had been



**Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi at the Deerhurst Resort at Muskoka in Huntsville, Ontario, Canada. On Nov. 27, 2013, Italy's senate stripped the former prime minister of his parliamentary seat, a dramatic and humiliating expulsion, even as other troubles loom on Berlusconi's horizon.**  
**(Luke Sharrett/The New York Times)**

fraud conviction. His effort to avoid expulsion from the Senate was fatally undermined earlier this month

and other former lieutenants would refuse to join the former prime minister's re-branded political party,

committed to Berlusconi and eliminating the possibility he could beat an expulsion vote. □





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## Hard-line Iranian lawmakers criticize Geneva deal

ALI AKBAR DAREINI

Associated Press

**TEHRAN, Iran (AP)** — Hard-line Iranian lawmakers criticized a nuclear deal reached in Geneva last week, with one calling it a “poisoned chalice,” but a majority of deputies who spoke Wednesday in a parliamentary hearing on the accord backed an initiative that appears to enjoy both wide public support and the endorsement of top clerics. Having signed the first-stage accord that curbs Iranian nuclear activity in exchange for limited relief from sanctions, President Hassan Rouhani and his foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif now have the task of trying to convince skeptics that they are not compromising on key issues of national sovereignty. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has publically supported nuclear nego-



**Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, center, talks with members of the parliament as he arrives in Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013. Hard-line Iranian politicians publicly criticized the deal reached in Geneva last week over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, an agreement that has largely been welcomed by Iranians.**

(AP Photo/Ebrahim Noroozi)

tiators and opposition to the deal seems limited, but opinion can shift quickly in Iran and Rouhani's task will become more delicate as the country moves toward a final accord six months from now.

In the debate broadcast live on state radio, Zarif tried to deflect criticism by noting that some construction will continue at the planned Arak heavy water reactor, whose advancement was effectively frozen by the Ge-

neva accord.

Zarif pointed out the building projects would not involve areas covered by the deal, including the installation of new equipment or work toward making the reactor operational. But even minor progress at Arak could bring claims by Israel and other opponents of the deal that Iran is violating its rules and spirit. Heavy water reactors such as Arak produce a greater amount of byproduct plutonium, which can be used in nuclear weapons production if extracted by a special process. Iran has pledged not to pursue facilities that could separate the plutonium.

Speaking Wednesday, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki stressed that Zarif specifically noted capacity at the Arak site is not going to increase. She said nothing Zarif said implied a violation of the agreement.

“It means no nuclear fuel will be produced and no installations will be installed, but construction will continue there,” she said. “We’re not sure exactly what he means by ‘construction,’” Psaki told reporters. “But there will be no work on the reactor itself, no work to prepare fuel for the reactor or do additional testing of the reactor.”

For their part, Iranian hard-liners said that the deal placed overly sweeping restrictions on the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities. Lawmaker Ruhollah Hosseini said the deal was so vague and conditional that it may finally lead to a shutting down of Iran's uranium enrichment program, which can lead to material used in nuclear weapons. Iran denies Western claims that it is pursuing weapons and says the enriched uranium is needed for peaceful purposes. □

## Syria says won't rescind power in peace talks

ALBERT AJI

Associated Press

**DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)** — The Syrian government said Wednesday it will participate in U.N.-sponsored peace talks aimed at ending the country's civil war, but insisted that it is not going to the conference to hand over power. The United Nations on Monday announced that the long-delayed peace talks will begin Jan. 22 in Geneva. The meeting, which would be the first face-to-face talks between President Bashar Assad's government and its opponents since the Syrian war began, has raised hopes that a resolution to a conflict that activists say has killed

more than 120,000 people could be within reach. In Tehran, the Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers called for a ceasefire as soon as possible, saying that a halt in fighting would enhance chances of peace talks succeeding. Even the most modest attempts to stop the war in Syria, now in its third year, have failed. The two ministers declined to give details of the latest ceasefire efforts when they talked to reporters at a joint press conference Wednesday. The continued bloodletting is but one of huge hurdles that remains ahead of talks. There is also no decision on the full list of participants.

The main Western-backed Syrian opposition group has said it is ready to attend, but wants the government to establish humanitarian corridors and release political prisoners as a confidence-building measure before it makes a final decision.

In a statement Wednesday, Syria's Foreign Ministry confirmed the government will attend, saying Assad will send an official delegation to the Geneva conference. The ministry stressed that the representatives “will be going to Geneva not to hand over power to anyone” but to meet with those “who support a political solution for Syria's future.” □



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# Auto sales boom spawns a used car market in China



Second hand cars are displayed at the Guangjun Used Auto Market in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. Explosive growth that transformed China into the world's biggest market for new cars is giving life to a new industry, secondhand autos. The challenge now is to develop a modern secondhand market in China, where most deals are done at big trading halls like the Guangjun market.

(AP Photo/Kelvin Chan)

**KELVIN CHAN**

**AP Business Writer**

**GUANGZHOU, China (AP)** — As car enthusiasts converge on the annual Guangzhou auto show, few have anything except a shiny new set of wheels in mind. But explosive

growth that transformed China into the world's largest auto market is also giving life to a new industry here: used cars. Chinese started buying new cars in huge numbers about four years ago, about the average length of time analysts say drivers will stick with a vehicle before trading it in for a fresh model. The secondhand market is already taking off, with sales growth last year outpacing that for new vehicles. By volume it is still dwarfed by new cars, which outsold used vehicles three to one. In countries such as the U.S., that ratio is reversed, highlighting the secondhand market's vast potential to make car ownership affordable for millions more Chinese. The challenge in China is to develop a modern market for secondhand autos. The business is dominated by thousands

of small trading companies that operate out of big trading halls or open air markets on city outskirts. Vehicles are sold tax free and ownership can be transferred in a day but quality and fair pricing can be uncertain. By some estimates, four in five used car transactions take place at these markets. For foreign automakers, "the used car business in China is very different to anything that you would recognize in the Western world," said Marin Burela, president of Changan Ford, the U.S. company's China joint venture. Global automakers have been slow to add used car sales at dealerships but are now racing to expand into the business, which will diversify their revenue and help build brand loyalty. Liu Yu-chen, a 28-year-old snack food entrepreneur, plans to buy his first second-hand car after owning a series of new vehicles, the latest a Toyota Prado SUV bought in August. "After conducting a good inspection, you just need to figure out whether the car appears to have been in any accidents," said Liu as he browsed vehicles at Guangzhou's Guangjun Used Car Market, which houses dozens of small auto trading companies. He is budgeting up to 1 million renminbi (\$164,000) for a used Land Rover and doesn't consider the price tag high. Luxury autos tend to be more expensive in China because of taxes and foreign automakers pushing the limits of what they can charge.

# Thailand cuts rates amid political strife

**BANGKOK (AP)** — Thailand's central bank unexpectedly lowered the cost of credit Wednesday as escalating protests to topple the government add to pressure on the economy. The Bank of Thailand said it lowered its policy interest rate by a quarter percentage point to 2.25 percent, hoping to stimulate lending and investment. Flag-waving protesters vowing to topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra took to the streets of Bangkok for a fourth straight day Wednesday. They are threatening to



Anti-government protesters march to the Industry Ministry in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013. Protesters vowing to topple Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra took to the streets for a fourth straight day on Wednesday, declaring they would take over "every ministry" of the government.

(AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

occupy every government ministry after invading the Ministry of Finance and turning it into an ad-hoc protest headquarters. The central bank said in a statement that the "ongoing political situation" could compound existing weaknesses in Southeast Asia's second-largest economy. Business confidence is fragile and government plans for \$69.5 billion of spending on high speed rail and other transport infrastructure have been delayed by legal challenges.



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## Dominican officials cancel meeting with Haiti

EZEQUIEL ABIU LOPEZ

Associated Press

**SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP)** — The Dominican Republic announced Wednesday that it would no longer meet with Haitian officials to talk about a court ruling that could strip citizenship from those born to migrants living in the country illegally. The decision comes a day after the Caribbean Community criticized the ruling and said it would defer a Dominican request to become a member of the trade bloc. Dominican Presidential Minister Gus-



Marie Matte Mayan 26, sleeps on the floor with her twins, Maude-line and Maudena Pierre in a shelter after being deported by Dominican Republic authorities, in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)

tavo Montalvo said the government canceled a meeting scheduled for Saturday in Venezuela because it feels Haiti violated an earlier agreement to prioritize bilateral dialogue in the case. "Haiti has chosen to take another road and that puts an end to our conversations at this time," he said in a statement. Montalvo did not comment further.

Meanwhile, Jose Ramon Fadul, president of the Dominican Republic's National Migration Council, accused Caricom of interference and retaliation. Haiti President Michel Martelly had attended Caricom's meeting and said he was supposed to meet with Dominican officials by week's end, noting he

wanted to see concrete action taken.

The rise in tensions between the two countries that share the island of Hispaniola comes as more than 350 Haitians and people of Haitian descent were expelled or volunteered to leave the Dominican Republic. The exodus followed the killing of an elderly Dominican couple during an apparent burglary near the border, and the subsequent slaying of a Haitian man by a mob of Dominicans.

Salim Succar, an adviser to Haiti Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, said he deeply regrets the Dominican government's decision.

"We remain very open and committed to discuss decisions that affect both our nations," he said.

## Bahamas, Coast Guard continue migrant search

**MIAMI (AP)** — The U.S. Coast Guard found a man Wednesday who survived the deadly capsizing of a boat packed with migrants in the Bahamas as a search continued for survivors or more bodies.

A crew from a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter spotted the survivor on a small island northeast of Green Cay, about 10 miles from where a sailboat with about 150 Haitian migrants on board ran aground and capsized on Monday night, officials said.

The man was turned over to Bahamian authorities, who are conducting a criminal investigation into the smuggling voyage that officials believe resulted in about 30 deaths. So far, 10 bod-

ies have been recovered and approximately 15-20 bodies have been spotted from the air, said Lt. Origin Deleveaux of the Royal Bahamas Defense Force.

The 40-foot sailboat capsized in the Exuma chain in an area dotted with reefs, rocks, tiny islands and water that is too shallow in many places for the RBDF vessels, making it difficult to find and recover bodies, Deleveaux said.

"These are dangerous waters, unnavigable waters," he said.

"They take this route because they realize it is an area we can't navigate in our vessels."

The sailboat capsized near Harvey Cays, about 70 miles (112 kilometers) south-

east of New Providence, the island that includes the capital of Nassau.



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# Problems pile up in Asia for US

**M. PENNINGTON**  
**Associated Press**  
**BEIJING/WASHINGTON**  
**(AP)** — While the Obama administration is making diplomatic progress on some of the Mideast's thorniest security issues, problems are piling up in Asia, a region that President Barack Obama had wanted to play a bigger part in American foreign policy.

contrition from Tokyo for Japan's use of Korean sex slaves in World War II. That complicates the strategic picture for the Obama administration as it looks to advance its so-called pivot to Asia and strengthen not just its own alliances, but get its partners in the region to collaborate more. "The region is moving in a very problematic direc-

Vice President Joe Biden will broach these issues when he travels to Japan, China and South Korea next week — a trip to demonstrate that the top level of the administration remains focused on Asia. The administration said that in Beijing, Biden will meet with Chinese leaders including President Xi Jinping and will voice concern about what it calls



Computer screens display a map showing the outline of China's new air defense zone in the East China on the website of the Chinese Ministry of Defense, in Beijing. While the Obama administration is making diplomatic progress on some of the Mideast's thorniest security issues, problems are piling up for the US in Asia.

(AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

Despite efforts to forge deeper ties with China to make East Asia more stable, Beijing's declaration of a maritime air defense zone has escalated its territorial dispute with U.S. ally Japan. The U.S. responded by flying B-52 bombers through the zone on a training mission Tuesday without informing Beijing. Analysts say the risk of a military clash between the Asian powers has gone up a notch — a serious concern for the U.S. because its treaty obligations mean it could be drawn in to help Japan. Meantime, relations between America's core allies in the region, Japan and South Korea, have deteriorated. South Korea is bitter over Japan's attitude toward its colonial past and wants more

tion," said Evans Revere, a former senior U.S. diplomat and East Asia specialist. "That's the result of territorial disputes, historical issues, long-standing rivalries and the inability of countries to put history behind them and move forward in improving relations." Adding to this witches' brew of bickering in the region, Washington is grappling with the threat posed by an unpredictable North Korea. The deal the U.S. orchestrated with Iran to temporarily freeze its nuclear program, despite three decades of animosity, is a stark reminder of the impasse in negotiations with Pyongyang. Unlike Iran, North Korea already has a nuclear bomb, and there's worrying evidence it is pressing ahead with weapons development.

an emerging pattern of behavior by China that is unsettling to its neighbors. The vice president will also make clear the firm U.S. commitment to its allies and its desire for a lowering of tensions between China and Japan, the world's second- and third-largest economies. Secretary of State John Kerry hasn't neglected the region, but his primary focus is on the Mideast and is likely to remain that way as he strives for the distant goals of an end to Syria's civil war, peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and a comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran after the current pact expires in six months. U.S. domestic woes have contributed to a narrative that Asia is a secondary concern to the administration. □

# US says working with Cuba to solve new banking issue

**PETER ORSI**  
**Associated Press**

**HAVANA (AP)** — Washington said Wednesday it is actively working with Cuba to find a new financial institution to handle its diplomatic accounts in the United States, after the Caribbean nation announced that a banking cutoff had forced it to halt nearly all U.S. consular services just ahead of the holiday high season for travel. The U.S. State Department said in an emailed communique that the U.S. bank that had handled Cuba's accounts severed the relationship due to a "business decision," and that the government does not have the power to interfere or order any bank to handle a foreign mission's account.

It added that Cuba's situation is not unique, saying the closure of embassy accounts can hurt operations at other diplomatic outposts.

"The U.S. government seeks to help foreign missions in the United States that have trouble obtaining banking services," the State Department said, "while ensuring the continued security of the U.S. financial system including through appropriate regulatory oversight."

"We would like to see the Cuban missions return to full operations."

On Tuesday, Cuba stopped providing almost all consular services including passport and visa processing at both the Cuban Interests Section in Washington and its Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

It blamed the 51-year-old U.S. embargo, which outlaws most financial transactions with the Communist-run country, for its banking difficulties. Havana said it had tried unsuccessfully to move its accounts to multiple other banks, and expressed regret for the "negative impact" that slashing consular services will have for people planning trips to the island.

Analyst Emilio Morales of the U.S.-based Havana Consulting Group told The Associated Press that an estimated 557,000 U.S. travelers will visit the island this year carrying about \$2 billion, a huge boon for individual families and the broader economy.

Most are Cuban-Americans who bring cash to relatives, and there are also smaller numbers of visitors on academic, religious and "people-to-people" cultural exchanges. All are legal under embargo rules, and the year-end holidays see a big bump in Cuba travel.

"If there is no prompt solution to the measures taken by the government of Cuba on the suspension of consular services ... the Cuban people could be severely harmed economically by their relatives being unable to travel," Morales said. "It would also mean million-dollar losses for agencies that sell airline tickets and for the Cuban government."

Morales projected that each month of delay could cost \$158 million in lost remittances and \$23 million in losses for travel companies.

Two travel operators told AP that all their clients for the next month already have their paperwork in order, so they're not worried about missing out on the holiday bonanza.

"Everybody is panicking, of course, because people who have pending trips are nervous," said Tessie Aral, president of ABC Charters, which runs flights to Cuba. But "as far as I'm concerned, with the customers I have, we're not going to have a major impact in December."

Tom Popper, director of tour operator Insight Cuba, is continuing to book tours and said he's optimistic that a solution will be found. He said finding a bank for the Cuban missions would be ideal, but the country could also issue tourist cards at the point of entry as happens in many other nations. □





## Prepare for the holidays at Palais Hindu Christmas World!

**EAGLE** - What's new and turning heads at Palais Hindu Christmas World this year? As December draws closer, excitement builds for that time of year when families gather to decorate their tree, pulling glittering ornaments, ribbons and endless strings of flashing lights out of boxes.

The biggest question during our favorite festive season is: "What should I do this year?" If you're looking for inspiration, come on over to Palais Hindu and let us do what we do best: take you on a journey through the season's hottest trends to create a tree that's uniquely yours.

So strap yourself in and prepare to take a seriously fun journey through Christmas World where this season's colors and themes are in full evidence. Prepare for a trip that will take you to the "Eiffel Tower" in France, then all the way to Japan for "Sushi" with a stop at "The Buddha" from Thailand.

According to the style gurus, emerald is this season's colour, and the peacock, among the trendiest icons for 2013. Taking our cue from this, we've created a tree that combines some

of our most extravagant and exotic ornaments. Poinsettias with peacock eyes painted on them and blue rhinestoned butterflies are nestled among glittered peacock and emerald green ferns on this tree. Multiple strands of matching ribbon, gold-flecked snowflakes and textured balls in royal blue complete the look. Stunning, if we may say so ourselves!

Though glitter and shine may be the choice of many, some of our customers prefer a more natural look. Among the year's hottest trees is "All Things Natural" - also our most popular and most visited tree, and our Customers Choice this year. "All Things Natural" is home to natural burlap snowmen, poinsettias, wooden owls and stars, jute teddy bears and felt gingerbread men. Bright red berries and poinsettias stand out beautifully against this natural backdrop. Hands down our favorite tree this Christmas!

Every year Palais Hindu does specialty trees. Besides these, we always pay tribute to Aruba, Carnival and Kids. This year, our Parrot tree pays tribute to the tropical island we call

home.

We all have boxes of special ornaments, the ones that bring to mind the most precious times in our lives. Newly-weds can begin their collection with a selection of "Our First Christmas" ornaments that highlight our Purple tree. This tree is aptly surrounded by metallic silver poinsettias and pearl hearts. Exotic orchids in trend-setting purple fall gently from the boughs of this tree, imbuing it with a bit of tropical magic and vibrance.

Quite apart from newly-weds, fashion lovers will delight in our mix of purple, silver, black and white.

What would Christmas be without white? Our 12-foot tall tree is positively brimming with feathered angels, snowflakes, glittery picks, silver and white glass balls, crystal drops and elegant white birds. Look also for a very special clear glass ball filled with falling snowflakes.

At Palais Hindu, we have all of this AND SO MUCH MORE! We have over 35 trees displaying some of the exciting possibilities for this Christmas season. Do stop by and take a look. We'd love to help you find the



perfect tree or ornaments to express what Christmas means to you. And if we have a ball while we're at

it, well, that's just the way we do things at Palais Hindu Christmas World. Merry Christmas! □





## Colleagues celebrate the season early, at Amazonia Churrascaria!



**PALM BEACH** - Colleagues from the Westin Aruba Resort got together over delicious food and drink at Amazonia Churrascaria. With the beginning of the high season, they took some time out to recharge and enjoy each other's company, says Marina Stamper, enjoying unlimited amounts of grilled meats, served by friendly carvers table-side, accompanied by a fresh and varied salad bar.

During the next weeks a great number of small and large groups will be making a pilgrimage to Amazonia Churrascaria to celebrate the holidays for variety of personal and business events. Dinner guests may choose from packages starting at a very reasonable charge per person, which will sat-



isfy everyone, from kids to adults, and from meat lovers to vegetarians.

All packages include unlimited trips to the extravagant 52-item fresh seasonal salad bar, as well as unlimited visits from the roaming gauchos, who serve up different cuts of fire-roasted beef, pork, lamb and chicken. All of this accom-

panied by the restaurant's popular side dishes and sauces, and topped off with decadent desserts.

Make sure you reserve your holiday celebration at Amazonia in advance. For more information or reservations, please call 586-4444, or send an email to [Julie@amazonia-aruba.com](mailto:Julie@amazonia-aruba.com). □

## "ARUBA HELPS THE PHILIPPINES"

**ORANJESTAD** - Ami Henriquez-Mendez, the honorary Consul General of the Philippine Consulate of Aruba is inviting the public for a Radio/Telethon fundraising event on Sunday, December 1st in Linear Park from 12noon-6pm.

This fundraising is to help the victims & their families during the earthquake & typhoon disaster that claimed 6000 registered deaths & a million homeless inhabitants in the Philippines 3 weeks ago.

There will be plenty of food /desserts & T-shirts sale, 7 Rock Bands for a concert, performances of local & Filipino artists, dances & other presentations.

To those that would like to donate some food & items to sale as donations – please call at 586-5766. We have available tents for usage.

The official event is called "ARUBA HELPS THE PHILIPPINES" and the public can deposit at CMB # 62558205 or Banco di Caribe # 82272501 under the same name. All donations will be

audited by Price Waterhouse Cooper.

A special mass will be held at Sta. Filomena Church in Paradera on Saturday, Nov. 30 at 7pm. Fr. Toti will



officiate the mass.

We would like to thank DOW, SETAR, SERLIMAR, TOTAL SERVICES, Press, Radio Stations & TV, Western Union, Eva's Arubiana, Tropical Bottling, Andina Ice, Hopi Bon Grill for the extra efforts to make this event a possibility. We know there will be more to be mentioned.

Please come and donate for a good cause. No little help is too small, everything counts for them to get started & to give them HOPE.

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## Associates glean helpful tips during Health Week at Westin



**PALM BEACH** –Last week, the Westin Resort & Casino, Aruba hosted a menu of activities and expos for all associates and

managers during Health Week, an annual event coordinated by the Human Resources department. Healthy lunches

and menu ideas utilizing SuperFoods Rx were introduced, as well as fitness seminars, and a fun run/walk—all part of a full

week's agenda encouraging associates to incorporate healthy lifestyle choices into their everyday routine. □



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## Lions can't wait to wipe away memory of bad loss

To the Detroit Lions, the four-day turnaround between NFL games this week is a good thing. With the division rivals the Green Bay Packers coming to town on Thanksgiving Thursday, the Lions can quickly wash away the taste of their worst defeat of the season. The Lions' 24-21 loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday was their second in a row since taking over sole possession of first place in the NFC North. The Lions are now tied atop the division with Chicago. "We all need to remind ourselves there's five games remaining, and we're in first place," coach Jim Schwartz said. "We need to conduct ourselves accordingly, and we can't worry what happened last week, we can't worry about what happened yesterday. We need to worry about what's going to happen in the future. I like our team's mindset." As soon as Sunday's game ended, some players were already eager to move on to the Packers. "We had a ton of mistakes



**Detroit Lions tight end Joseph Fauria (80), defended by Tampa Bay Buccaneers free safety Dashon Goldson (38), catches a 10-yard reception for a touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game in Detroit, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013.**

and we had a chance to win," receiver Nate Burleson said. "Be mad about that, but we've got a chance to win the division. There's so much more to be happy about than to be overly frustrated." The Lions have lost nine in a row on Thanksgiving. Detroit's last victory on Thanksgiving was in 2003 — against the Packers. Matt Flynn looks set to carry on as the Packers quarterback, four days after helping them come back from a 16-point deficit in the fourth quarter to tie the Minnesota Vikings 26-26 in overtime. Flynn is the team's fourth quarterback this month, and third replacement since Aaron Rodgers broke his hand on Nov. 4. Green Bay, with a 5-2 record at the time, has been winless since then. Working in Flynn's favor is he's familiar with the Packers' system after having been drafted by the team in 2008 and serving as Rodgers' backup for four seasons before leaving as a free agent in 2012.

**Continued on Page 20**

## Stars score 3 in 53 seconds in win over Ducks

**STEPHEN HAWKINS**  
**AP Sports Writer**

**DALLAS (AP)** — Cody Eakin, Stephane Robidas and Ryan Garbutt scored in a 53-second span of the third period as the Dallas Stars beat the Pacific Division leading Anaheim Ducks 6-3 on Tuesday for their first home win in more than month. The Stars trailed 2-1 before the three-goal flurry against Jonas Hiller. Antoine Roussel scored twice for Dallas, and Alex Chias-

son added an empty-net goal in the final minute. Eakin's sixth goal of the season leveled it 2-2 with 14:35 left. Only 25 seconds later, Robidas was between the circles when he scored his fourth of the season. Garbutt then gathered a loose puck and scored with a backhanded swipe with 13:42 left to make it 4-2. Roussel was in the crease when he netted his second goal with just under 8 minutes left. Hiller quickly

argued with the referee to no avail, trying to get an interference call. Dan Ellis stopped 28 shots, winning for only the second time in seven games. Dallas had been 0-2-2 at home since a 5-1 victory over Calgary on Oct. 24. Emerson Etem, Nick Bonino and Dustin Penner scored for the Ducks, who are 10-4-3 in their last 17 games. Penner's tally was a power-play goal with 6½ minutes left. □



**Dallas Stars left wing Ryan Garbutt (16) scores on Anaheim Ducks goalie Jonas Hiller (1) during the third period of an NHL hockey game in Dallas, Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2013. Dallas won the game 6-3.**

**Associated Press**



# NFL upholds suspension of Titans safety on appeal

TERESA M. WALKER

AP Sports Writer

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP)

— The NFL has upheld the one-game suspension of Titans safety Michael Griffin as a repeat offender of the league's rules prohibiting hits to the head and neck area of defenseless players. Appeals officer Matt Birk upheld the suspension Tuesday after Griffin appealed the punishment that will keep him out of Sunday's game at Indianapolis.

Griffin was flagged for unnecessary roughness in the second quarter of a 23-19 win Sunday for a hit on Oakland tight end Mychal Rivera. He went low, hitting Rivera as the player went to the ground after attempting a catch. It was Griffin's second violation this season and fourth since 2011.

The suspension will cost Griffin \$205,882.35 of his

\$3.5 million base pay this season, and he is prohibited from any football activities until Monday.

Griffin was fined \$21,000 for hitting Jets receiver Stephen Hill high while blocking after an interception Sept. 29.

The NFL also fined Griffin \$21,000 last season for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Minnesota receiver Michael Jenkins last season, and the safety was fined \$7,500 for a late hit in the head area with his helmet in a game at Carolina in November 2011.

The timing isn't good for the Titans (5-6) who currently sit in the AFC's sixth and final playoff spot after only their second win in the past seven games. They trail Indianapolis by two games in the AFC South going into Sunday's game.

This will be only the second game Griffin, a two-time Pro Bowl safety, has missed



Oakland Raiders tight end Mychal Rivera (81) loses his helmet after being hit by Tennessee Titans free safety Michael Griffin during the second quarter of an NFL football game in Oakland, Calif., Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013.

Associated Press

since being a first-round draft pick in 2007. He has started 99 of his 106 games

played in his career.

Rivera, a rookie out of the University of Tennessee,

had his helmet knocked off in the collision and did not return to the game. □

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# Afflalo, Magic end road skid, 109-92 over Hawks

**ATLANTA (AP)** — Arron Afflalo scored 26 points, Victor Oladipo and Andrew Nicholson added 18 apiece as the Orlando Magic snapped a 17-game road losing streak with a 109-92 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday. NBA Capsules

Al Horford and Jeff Teague each finished with 15 points for the Hawks, who lost consecutive games for the first time this season. The Magic began the night having lost four straight overall and five in a row on the road. They won away from Orlando for the first time since last March 4 at New Orleans. Nikola Vucevic grabbed 15 rebounds, Jameer Nelson had 10 assists, and the Magic got a combined 30 points from Nicholson and E'Twaun Moore off the bench. The Hawks never led after Afflalo's 3-pointer put the Magic ahead 67-65 with 5:09 left in the third.

## WIZARDS 116, LAKERS 111

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — John Wall stayed hot with 31 points and nine assists, Nene had a career high 30 as Washington broke Los Angeles' three-game winning streak.

Wall scored more than 30 points for the third straight



Orlando Magic point guard Jameer Nelson (14) looks to pass as he goes up in the lane against the Atlanta Hawks during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2013, in Atlanta. Orlando won 109-92.

Associated Press

game for the first time in his career, with his 13 fourth-quarter points coming in the final 4:40 to help

Washington hold off Los Angeles. Wall was 10 for 18 from the field and made 11 of 12 free throws. Nene

surpassed his previous career best by two points on 13-for-22 shooting from the field. Martell Webster added 20 points with four 3-pointers.

Jordan Farmar led the Lakers with 22 and Pau Gasol had 17.

## NETS 102, RAPTORS 100

**TORONTO (AP)** — Andray Blatche scored 24 points, Joe Johnson had 21 as Brooklyn snapped a five-game losing streak by beating Toronto.

Paul Pierce scored 16 points and Kevin Garnett had 12 as the Nets won for the first time since beating Phoenix on Nov. 15.

Brooklyn won for just the third time in its past nine games in Canada, getting the victory despite playing without guard Deron Williams and center Brook Lopez, both of whom are sidelined with left ankle injuries.

DeMar DeRozan scored 27 points and Kyle Lowry had 21 for the Raptors, who lost a two-game winning streak.

Toronto's Amir Johnson missed a potential go-ahead 3-pointer from the corner in the final seconds.

## WARRIORS 102, PELICANS 101

**NEW ORLEANS (AP)** — Klay

Thompson scored 22 points and tied a career high with eight assists as Golden State snapped a three-game skid by defeating New Orleans.

Eric Gordon had a chance to win it for New Orleans with an open 3-pointer from the left corner in the final seconds, but the shot rimmed out and Anthony Davis couldn't quite reach the rebound.

Jermaine O'Neal returned from right knee and groin injuries that had sidelined him for four games and did not look at all rusty, sinking his first seven shots en route to 18 points — including a clutch baseline hook with 2:06 left. David Lee added 19 points.

Ryan Anderson had 21 points and 12 rebounds for New Orleans. Davis finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds.

The Warriors' Stephen Curry struggled to find his usual accuracy, missing 13 of 20 shots, but scored seven of his 16 points in a tight fourth quarter. Harrison Barnes added 14 points.

In other NBA games it was Washington 116, L.A. Lakers 111; Brooklyn 102, Toronto 100; Orlando 109, Atlanta 92; and Golden State 102, New Orleans 101. □

## NFL Preview

Continued from Page 18

"I think we're so much further ahead than we were last week," coach Mike McCarthy said. "I feel a lot better."

Also on Thursday, the Dallas Cowboys play the Oakland Raiders, and the Baltimore Ravens welcome the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Matt McGloin's rapid ascent from undrafted rookie to starting NFL quarterback will be viewed by a national television audience when he makes his third career start for the Raiders. McGloin became the fourth quarterback since the 1970 merger to throw three touchdown passes and no interceptions in his first start, a 28-23 win at Houston. He then threw the go-ahead touchdown



Dallas Cowboys kicker Dan Bailey (5), with Chris Jones holding, kicks a game-winning field goal against the New York Giants during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013, in East Rutherford, N.J. The Cowboys won 24-21.

Associated Press

pass with 6:10 remaining last week against Tennessee before watching the defense give up the late lead in a 23-19 loss to the Titans. Now he will try to

get the Raiders back on the winning track against a Dallas defense that has allowed the second-most yards passing this season. "It's a great opportunity for

us," McGloin said. "Everybody has grown up watching that game with their families and to be a part of it is something special. We're all looking forward to it. We're excited about it. It's going to be a tough atmosphere for football, but we'll handle it."

For the second time in his three starts, McGloin will be opposed by another undrafted quarterback, albeit one with much more experience and pedigree. Tony Romo came into the NFL as an undrafted rookie in 2003 and spent his first two seasons on the bench before replacing Drew Bledsoe as starter midway through the 2006 season. He quickly established himself as one of the league's top quarterbacks and parlayed that success into a \$108 million contract extension last offseason

and he takes pride in the success of other undrafted quarterbacks.

"I always root for the undrafted kid to come up and have a chance to play and then they perform pretty well," Romo said. "I think that's always exciting and good for the league. I wish him the best."

A three-game winning streak has pushed the Steelers back into the thick of the playoff race. Save for a 27-point outburst in the second quarter by Detroit two weeks ago, the Steelers have allowed just two garbage-time touchdowns over their last 14 quarters of play. It's a trend Pittsburgh needs to continue. A victory over the Ravens would set up the Steelers for a favorable December schedule that includes three home games. □



# In revised suit, A-Rod accuses Selig of cowardice

RONALD BLUM

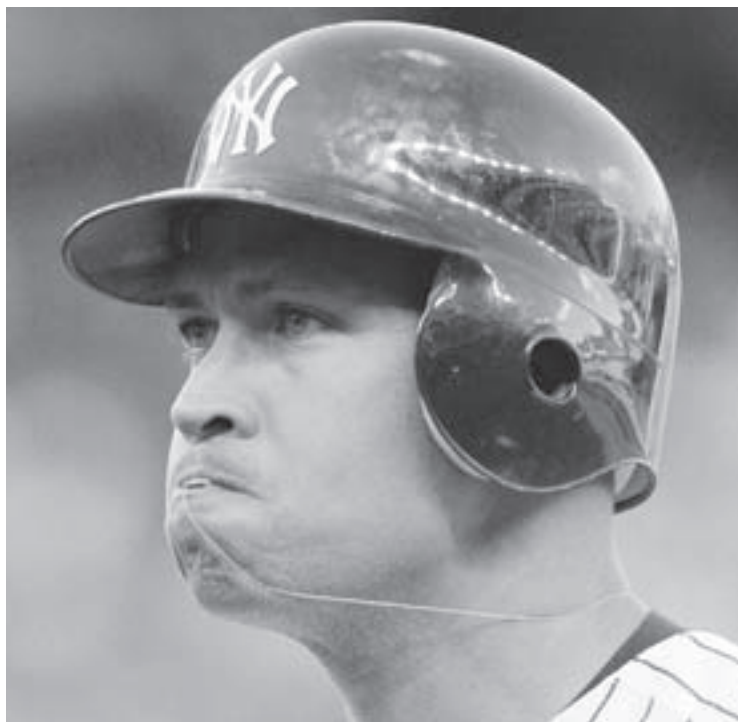
AP Sports Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Alex Rodriguez's lawyers have updated his lawsuit against Major League Baseball and Bud Selig, adding new criticism of the commissioner for not testifying in the union's grievance to overturn the 211-game suspension given to the New York Yankees star last summer.

The lawyers filed a 33-page amended complaint Tuesday in federal court in Manhattan, expanding on the suit originally filed Oct. 3 in New York Supreme Court.

Arbitrator Fredric Horowitz last week refused to compel Selig to testify in the grievance, and Rodriguez then walked out of the hearing without testifying. The sides rested last Thursday after 12 days of sessions, and a decision on whether to uphold or alter the discipline is expected in January.

"Mr. Selig chose to hide in his office in Milwaukee rather than come testify at the grievance hearing in New York. In Mr. Selig's world, apparently the 'buck' does not stop with Bud," the new complaint said. "Mr. Selig lacked the courage of his convictions to explain under oath the reasons for the suspension and the conduct of his investigators. His silence on these issues speaks volumes and leads to only one logical conclusion — his actions, and those of the MLB personnel he controls, were aimed at destroying the reputation, career and business prospects of Alex Rodriguez."



In this Sept. 23, 2012, file photo, New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez reacts after his ninth-inning fly-out in a 5-4 loss to the Oakland Athletics in a baseball game at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Associated Press

Rodriguez was suspended Aug. 5 for alleged violations of the sport's drug agreement and labor contract, and he played pending a determination of the grievance.

As he did in the original complaint, Rodriguez accused Selig of conducting a "witch hunt" against him. The three-time AL MVP criticized the methods MLB employed in its investigation of the Biogenesis of America anti-aging clinic, accused of distributing banned performance-enhancing drugs.

A-Rod's lawyers included a photograph of Selig posing with a fan wearing a red shirt that had "A-ROID" written across the front. While the lawsuit attributes the photo to NESN.com, the NESN's website says the photo was from the 2009 All-Star FanFest and was taken from NBCSportsRadio's Twitter feed.

"Sadly, this cowardly stance by Mr. Selig is consistent with his past and highly inappropriate conduct in posing, smilingly, with a young fan wearing a T-shirt with a derogatory message directed at Mr. Rodriguez," the amended lawsuit said. "One cannot imagine the Commissioner of any other professional sport — or indeed the CEO

of any business — doing something similar with respect to one of his or her players or employees."

MLB had the suit removed to federal court, and Rodriguez's lawyers are trying to persuade U.S. District Judge Lorna G. Schofield to remand the case back to New York state court. A hearing is scheduled for Jan. 23.

Rodriguez claimed Selig interfered with his existing contracts and prospective business relationships. MLB says the case should be heard in federal court because of provisions of the Labor Management Relations Act, known as Taft-Hartley, and intends to ask for the suit to be dismissed. Later Tuesday, Rodriguez's lawyers released a stack of documents, including a presentation dated Oct. 21. They called a news conference for that evening with the intent to release papers, only to be blocked by an order from Horowitz. The presentation criticizes the conduct of several MLB investigators and New York City Police.

The lawyers also released statements of several people who were on Rodriguez's witness list but never testified at the grievance hearing.

Marcelo Albir and Lazaro

Collazo accused MLB's investigators of harassment, which the league denies. Gary L. Jones, who says he was a friend of Porter Fischer, said he was paid \$125,000 in \$100 bills by MLB Senior Vice President Dan Mullin at the Cosmos Diner in Pompano Beach, Fla., last March and \$25,000 by Mullin in \$50s and \$100s for additional documents the following month. He also

states Jones told Mullin that the documents had been stolen.

MLB says the first payment was \$100,000 and denies the comments Jones attributed to Mullin.

Robert Davis Miller alleged Biogenesis founder Anthony Bosch told him he was being paid \$5 million by MLB in monthly installments, which the league also denies. □

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**SENSEI REDENSHON**  
NR  
MON - THURS 4:40 | 7:05 | 9:35  
FRI 4:40 | 7:05 | 9:35 | 12:00  
SAT 2:15 | 4:40 | 7:05 | 9:35 | 12:00  
SUN & HOL 2:15 | 4:40 | 7:05 | 9:35

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**THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE**  
PG-13  
MON - FRI 6:05 | 9:10  
SAT, SUN & HOL 3:00 | 6:05 | 9:10  
MON - THURS 4:20 | 7:25  
FRI 4:20 | 7:25 | 10:30  
SAT 4:20 | 7:25 | 10:30  
SUN & HOL 4:20 | 7:25  
MON - THURS 5:25 | 8:30  
FRI 5:25 | 8:30 | 11:35  
SAT 2:20 | 5:25 | 8:30 | 11:35  
SUN & HOL 2:20 | 5:25 | 8:30

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**Sanky panky2**  
PG  
SPANISH VERSION  
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FRI 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50 | 11:00  
SAT 2:20 | 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50 | 11:00  
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**LAST VEGAS**  
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SAT 2:00 | 4:25 | 6:50 | 9:15 | 11:40  
SUN & HOL 2:00 | 4:25 | 6:50 | 9:15

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3D VERSION  
PG-13  
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FRI 4:30 | 7:00 | 9:30 | 12:00  
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# NFL, NHL concussion cases are not the same

**DAVE CAMPBELL**

**AP Sports Writer**

Three months after the NFL agreed on a \$765 million settlement with thousands of ex-players for concussion-related health problems, a group of their NHL peers is going to court, too.

Hockey has proven to be an equally dangerous sport as football, but that doesn't mean the link between collisions on the ice and post-career trouble will lead to a similar outcome. The legal and cultural surroundings of the NFL and NHL concussion lawsuits are more distinct than alike.

Former NFL players haven't just taken the league to task for their concussion-related concerns; they've sued over all kinds of alleged misconduct, including their rights to memorabilia and highlight film revenue.

In the NHL, there's more blatant loyalty expressed by the players who used to don the uniforms. Hockey players have a penchant for closing ranks when controversy arises, and this is no different.

Two prominent former players, Ken Daneyko and Keith Primeau, expressed disinterest in pursuing concussion claims against the league when interviewed prior to the introduction of the lawsuit despite their lingering physical side effects from years of playing the game.

Jeremy Roenick, in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday, was even more outspoken about his disregard for the lawsuit that was filed Monday in federal court in Washington.

"I'm not going to tell people what to do and say they're all trying to cap on the system right now. That's their prerogative," said Roenick, a 20-year veteran of five NHL teams. "They can put themselves in public. They can go after the league that they craved to be in since they were little kids and paid their salary. ... I've always lived in the fact that I played the game of hockey knowing there was a lot of risk to be taken. I went on the ice knowing that my health and my life could be altered in a split second, and I did it because I loved the game."

Roenick said he had 13 concussions during his career.

"I can tell you that the teams I was with handled it very well and professionally throughout the whole ordeal," Roenick said.

Ten former players, including All-Star forward Gary Leeman, are named as plaintiffs in the class-action lawsuit. It alleges the NHL hasn't done enough to protect



**IN an April 12, 2012 file photo former Toronto Maple Leafs captain Rick Vaive adjusts his tie as he enters a courthouse in Newmarket, Ontario. Ten former National Hockey League players, including former Toronto Maple Leafs' captain Vaive, claimed in a class-action lawsuit that the league hasn't done enough to protect players from concussions.**

**Associated Press**

players from concussions and seeks court-approved, NHL-sponsored medical monitoring for the players' injuries as well as monetary damages. Attorney Steve Silverman said a total of about 200 former players have signed up to be included in the action.

"What the NFL concussion lawsuit did, not in the minds of the lawyers but in the minds of the former players, was give them confidence and hope that, yes, David can slay Goliath," Silverman said on Tuesday.

Among the allegations:

— The NHL knew or should have known about scientific evidence that players who sustain repeated head injuries are at greater risk for illnesses and disabilities both during their hockey careers and later in life.

— Even after the NHL created a concussion program to study brain injuries affecting NHL players in 1997, the league took no action to reduce the number and severity of concussions during a study period from 1997 to 2004.

— The league didn't do anything to protect players from unnecessary harm until 2010, when it made it a penalty to target a player's head.

NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said on Monday the league is "completely satisfied with the responsible manner in which the league and the players' association have managed player safety over time" and that it intends to defend the case "vigorously."

Leeman, who played for the Toronto, Calgary, Montreal, Vancouver and St. Louis from 1983-1996, suffered multiple concussions and sub-concussive impacts during his career, according to the lawsuit. Since his retirement, he's suffered from post-traumatic head syndrome, headaches, memory loss and dizziness.

Michael McCann, a sports law professor at the University of New Hampshire, expected this lawsuit to come like most observers of the NHL and the sports world in general. But he questioned whether the case is as strong as that of the

former NFL players.

"I don't know if I saw in this complaint as much as we saw in the complaint against the NFL, in terms of allegations of misconduct. Much of this complaint focused on how the NHL could've made the game safer at various points of time and how the league knew of information and didn't allegedly share it," McCann said. "In the NFL, there was the allegation that the league went out of its way to cloud the science. I didn't see any of that in this complaint. I saw the NHL could've done more and was interested in making money. Maybe there are ethical issues, but I don't see how that's necessarily a strong legal argument."

The complaint accused the NHL of being aware of studies dating to the 1920s of the danger the sport can cause to the head.

"Those studies are publicly available. So it's hard to call that any kind of fraud," McCann said. "It seems as if players and their own union could've availed themselves of that information." □



# Xbox, PlayStation tackle console launch glitches

**DERRIK J. LANG**

**AP Entertainment Writer**

Move over, zombies. Step aside, terrorists. Aliens, out of the way.

There are a few new foes affecting gamers that are proving to be far more destructive than any on-screen villain.

With nicknames like "the blue light of death" and "the disc drive of doom," they're the game-ending glitches causing headaches for a few gamers who picked up the next-generation Xbox One and PlayStation 4 consoles at launch. Microsoft Corp. said Monday it's replacing the Xbox One units of users who have reported systems that won't read discs, an issue dubbed "the disc drive of doom." The company said the problem is affecting "a very small number" of customers, who will also receive one free downloadable game from Microsoft Game Studios. Sony Corp. announced after the debut of the PS4 earlier this month that it was replacing the units for "less than 1 percent" of users whose

new consoles malfunctioned and displayed a pulsating blue light. The problem was given the moniker "the blue light of death."

Both glitches recall Microsoft's "red ring of death," when production problems caused several predecessors of the Xbox One to lock up and display three flashing red lights. Ultimately, the technology giant extended customers' warranties to three years and said in 2007 that it had spent more than \$1 billion to repair the problems associated with the Xbox 360.

"I understand these things happen, but it sucks when they happen to you," said Donald Blankinship, an Xbox One owner who experienced a faulty disc drive after purchasing the console at Best Buy. "I can still play downloadable games until the replacement arrives, so at least there's that."

Other users have reported consoles being completely unresponsive out of the box. Both Sony and Microsoft said they're working

to troubleshoot such issues and replace broken consoles as quickly as possible. While the issues seem to affect a minority of Xbox One and PS4 owners, the concerns could deter consumers who regularly play games on smartphones and mobile devices. Sony's PS4 costs \$399. Microsoft's Xbox One cost \$100 more and includes a Kinect sensor.

"When I think about the Xbox brand, we want it to mean quality," said Phil Spencer, corporate vice president of Microsoft Game Studios, at last week's Xbox One launch event. "That's critical to us. I think you can overcome things, but we don't plan on that. We plan on testing it — tens of thousands of hours — to make sure it's going to be a solid launch." Microsoft and Sony both announced that more than 1 million Xbox One and PS4 consoles were sold in the 24 hours after their release this month. It's been seven and eight years respectively since Microsoft and Sony launched the Xbox



In this Friday, Nov. 22, 2013 file photo, The Xbox One, above, is on display at a Best Buy store in Evanston, Ill.; and, below, In this Friday, Nov. 15, 2013 file photo, the new Sony Playstation 4 is on display at Lincoln Park BestBuy store, in Chicago.

Associated Press



360 and PlayStation 3. Sony said it expects to sell 5 million PS4 units by the end of its fiscal year in March. □

# Ex-Nokia engineers launch new smartphone

**MATTI HUUHTANEN**

**Associated Press**

**HELSINKI (AP)** — Engineers who used to work for Nokia are hoping to grab a share of the lucrative and highly competitive smartphone market with a new handset, which is based on the former world No. 1 cellphone maker's old software and is faintly reminiscent of its recent models.

The Jolla handset's Sailfish platform has been developed from the MeeGo operating software, Nokia's last open-source platform which it abandoned in 2011 when it switched over to using Microsoft Corp.'s Windows system.

The sleek 4.5-inch phone, which almost looks like it could be part of Nokia's Lumia range, features an eight megapixel camera, supports fast 4G Internet connections and includes the well-received Nokia's



A person holds up the new Jolla smartphone from Finnish mobile manufacturer Jolla in Helsinki, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013.

Associated Press

HERE mapping services that cover more than 190 countries.

But, unlike Nokia's phones, Jolla is also compatible with more than 85,000 apps provided by Google Inc.'s Android, the popular and dominant operating system that has helped

Samsung overtake the former Finnish bellwether to be the world's largest cellphone maker.

Marc Dillon, head of Jolla software and one of four founders of the company in 2011, spent 11 years working for Nokia after moving from the United States. He says Jolla's open operating system gives it an edge over rivals.

"We are providing a world-class choice ... that is an alternative for consumers (and) that can be very agile and powerful," Dillon said in an interview in a Helsinki office block previously occupied by Nokia employees before it laid off thousands. "For our operating system business we have a huge opportunity because there is currently one choice really available to every global mobile manufacturer and that's Android."

Other systems, such as

Apple's iOS or Microsoft's Windows, can be carried only on handsets manufactured by those companies.

In a consumer test, the Jolla, which has a price tag of 399 euros (\$540), didn't seem to have much to make it stand out among other smartphones. Its camera is standard; it uses a MicroSD card; has 16GB of memory storage, with a talk time and battery time of some 9-10 hours. But it has nice touches, including multiple swipe features and a useful user-replaceable battery, unlike many other models.

Neil Mawston from Strategy Analytics near London says the Jolla is not "an iPhone or Samsung Galaxy killer" although it but could find a niche in the relentless smartphone race.

"At some point people will start looking for an alternative to Android and

Apple so there might be an opportunity in this very cyclical market for Jolla to grab market share," Mawston said. "But I think it will be two or three versions down the line before we really know whether Jolla or Sailfish is worthy of challenging Apple or Android or Microsoft."

Finnish telecoms company DNA, which started selling the Jolla handset on Wednesday evening as hundreds lined up outside the Jolla-DNA marquee in the city center, said it had "thousands of preorders" in 136 countries, led by Finland, Germany and Britain. The company Jolla, which now has more than 100 employees in Finland and Hong Kong, has found backers among Finnish and foreign investors, including Hong-Kong based China Fortune Holdings Ltd., but Dillon declined to give more information. □



# US stocks climb on solid tech earnings reports

**STEVE ROTHWELL**  
**AP Markets Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Technology companies lifted the stock market Wednesday, keeping major indexes at record levels.

Hewlett-Packard surged, leading the gains for tech companies, after it posted a \$1.4 billion profit for its latest quarter. The world's second-largest maker of PCs also issued a strong profit forecast for its current quarter.

Stocks also got a boost from some encouraging news about the U.S. economy.

In a sign that workers are in less danger of being laid off, the number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits dropped 10,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 316,000, according to the U.S. Labor Department. In another bit of good news, consumer confidence rose in Novem-

ber, according to a private survey by the University of Michigan and financial data company Thomson Reuters.

"Today's economic news was generally favorable," said Terry Sandven, chief equity strategist for U.S. Bank Wealth Management. "In the absence of bad news, the path of least resistance for equities is up."

The stock market has surged this year on a combination of solid corporate earnings, a slowly recovering economy and easy-money policies from the Federal Reserve. The Fed is buying \$85 billion in bonds every month to keep long-term interest rates low, making stocks more attractive than bonds for investors.

On Wednesday, the Standard & Poor's 500 index climbed four points, or 0.3 percent, to close at an all-



**Specialists John Alatzas, left, and William Geier, right, work at their posts on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Technology companies lifted the stock market Wednesday, keeping major indexes at record levels.**

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

time high of 1,807.23.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 24 points, or 0.2 percent, to close at its own record high of 16,097.33. The blue-chip index finished higher for a

fifth straight day, its longest winning streak since March. The Nasdaq composite advanced 27 points, or 0.7 percent, to 4,044.75. The index closed above 4,000 for the first time in 13 years

Tuesday.

The S&P 500 has risen 26.7 percent this year, putting it on course for its best annual performance since 1998. Much of the gain has come because investors have been willing to pay more for a company's stock in relation to its earnings. The price-earnings ratio for S&P 500 companies has climbed to 15.1 from 12.6 at the start of the year. But it is still below the average ratio of 16.5 for the last 20 years.

"When times are good, you have to ask if it's a sign that things are about to become bad," said Art Steinmetz, President & Chief Investment Officer at Oppenheimer Funds. But Steinmetz feels reasonably hopeful that stock valuations "are not over-stretched."

In other corporate news, Analog Devices fell \$1.38, or 3 percent, to \$48.54 after the chipmaker reported sales late Tuesday that missed Wall Street estimates. The Norwood, Massachusetts, company expects a seasonal slowdown to hurt revenue during the holidays.

Trading volumes were lower than average ahead of Thursday's Thanksgiving holiday, when financial markets will be closed. The New York Stock exchange and the Nasdaq will also close early on Friday.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.74 percent, up from 2.71 percent on Tuesday.

The price of oil dropped to its lowest level in six months as the U.S. government reported the 10th straight weekly increase in crude supplies. Oil dropped \$1.38, or 2 percent, to \$92.30 a barrel.

Exxon Mobil and Chevron, both members of the 30-company Dow, declined. Exxon Mobil fell 47 cents, or 0.5 percent, to \$93.80. Chevron fell 36 cents, or 0.4 percent, to \$122.42.

In other commodities trading, gold fell \$3.60, or 0.3 percent, to \$1,237.80 an ounce. □

## HP earnings top expectations, but revenue falls

**QUENTIN HARDY**

© 2013 New York Times News

**SAN FRANCISCO** - Hewlett-Packard reported stronger-than-expected fourth-quarter earnings this week, telling analysts it was making great strides from its woeful position of 26 months ago, when Meg Whitman took over as chief executive.

But while HP outperformed the diminished expectations Wall Street had for the quarter, revenue was lower in five of its six business segments, and demand for key products like personal computers collapsed.

In an interview, Whitman said that she had built up HP's cash position and lowered its debt, while retooling businesses and shuffling executives, as part of an overall plan to move one of the world's largest information technology companies to "a new style of IT."

In that world, businesses and consumers will rent software over the Internet, and pay for technology-

infused experiences like the ability to print from a mobile phone to a kiosk at a FedEx store, as much as they now buy HP mainstays like laptop computers and printers.



**The Hewlett-Packard Co. logo is seen outside the company's headquarters in Palo Alto, Calif. Hewlett-Packard Co. reported quarterly financial results after the market closes on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2013.**

gies. "We haven't broken through that," Whitman said.

Some of the progress, in things like new kinds of tablet computers that use

puting business, may not show significant revenue for several years.

Analysts appeared content with HP's results, while warning about the difficulties ahead. HP reported net income of \$1.41 billion, or 73 cents a share, in contrast to a loss of \$6.85 billion, or \$3.49 a share, in the period a year earlier. Revenue was \$29.1 billion, a drop of 3 percent from a year ago.

The net income, excluding charges, was \$1.01 a share, above the expectations of Wall Street analysts. They had expected \$1 a share and revenue of \$27.91 billion, according to a survey of analysts by Thomson Reuters. The news sent HP stock up more than 5 percent in after-hours trading. Nonetheless, revenue from consumer PCs fell 10 percent. Revenue from software, an essential growth area for the company, fell 9 percent from a year earlier (in part related to a large sale HP made in 2012, making comparisons with new earnings difficult). □

(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

"This is a pretty big change," she said. "We need to do it with speed, and we need to leverage it with scale."

In PCs, HP's biggest business, she said, the company has to cater to "people's desire to personally compute," using a variety of devices and technolo-

Google's Android operating system instead of the Windows software from Microsoft, will be seen over the next few weeks, as HP offers a number of machines for the Christmas season. Other efforts, like the kiosk printing, three-dimensional printers, or HP's own so-called cloud com-



## Airlines clear final merger obstacle

JAD MOUAWAD

© 2013 New York Times

A federal court approved American Airlines' reorganization plan Wednesday, paving the way for the airline's exit from bankruptcy and clearing the final hurdle to its merger with US Airways to form the world's largest airline. The ruling by Judge Sean H. Lane, of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, puts an end to a rocky two-year period for the airline, which sought court protection to reorganize its business, shed debt and rewrite labor agreements.

A central feature of the reorganization plan was the merger with US Airways, a prospect that had the backing of American's creditors and employees. But the plan was temporarily disrupted after a challenge from the Justice Department over the summer on the grounds that it would hurt competition and lead to higher fares.

Just weeks before the trial was scheduled to start, however, regulators and the airlines settled the suit on Nov. 12. The bankruptcy court found the settlement did not modify the plan of reorganization enough to warrant a new vote by creditors and shareholders.

The airline and labor groups welcomed the ruling, which offers a chance for American to reclaim a top spot among the nation's carriers. The merged airline will have 6,700 daily flights, 1,500 airplanes, and about 100,000 employees. Its combined annual revenue will reach about \$38 billion.

American, which has lagged behind its rivals in recent years, was the last of the historic airlines to file for bankruptcy, stumbling from its perch as the nation's top carrier after falling behind Delta Air Lines and United Airlines. Both airlines had already reorganized their business in recent years and had expanded through mergers of their own.

American and US Airways argued that a combination was the best hope to provide travelers with a similar global network capable of competing with Delta and United or risk being left behind.

But American will have to work hard to convince passengers that a larger carrier can offer better and more customer-friendly service. Airline mergers are usually bumpy events, often marred by reservation problems and computer glitches. United, for example, suffered repeated flight delays and disruptions last year because of problems associated with its merger with Continental Airlines. It will be up to a renewed management team, led by US Airways' Doug Parker, to instill energy and fresh thoughts at American, where morale has been sapped by labor tensions in recent years. The combined airline, which will keep the name American Airlines, will be based in the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Parker has been a cheerleader for airline consolidation for years. He orchestrated the combination of American West with US Airways in 2005 and then sought to merge the smaller carrier with Delta as well as United, unsuccessfully.

After American filed for bankruptcy, Parker saw an opening to go after a fast combination despite the opposition of American's managers. He made his case quickly, first with airline employees, then with its creditors. He then persuaded the representatives of his rival's pilots, flight attendants and mechanics to all back a merger with US Airways provided that Parker would run the show.

The vote, which crystallized the employees' defiance against American's managers and what they described as a failed strategy over the years, proved a turning point in the battle for American's future.

Tom Horton, American's chairman and chief executive, had initially outlined a plan for the airline to come out of bankruptcy as an independent carrier, but was eventually forced to endorse the merger proposal once creditors supported it. □

## As layoffs slow;

# US jobless claims drop to 316,000

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits dropped 10,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 316,000, a sign that workers are in less danger of being laid off.

The less volatile four-week average fell 7,500 to 331,750, the Labor Department said Wednesday. Both the first-time weekly jobless claims and the average have returned to pre-recession levels.

Unemployment benefit applications are a proxy for layoffs. They have fallen in six of the past seven weeks. A government spokesman said there were no special factors that drove claims lower but cautioned that it can be difficult to seasonally adjust in late November because the Thanksgiving holiday occurs at different times each year. This year Thanksgiving is a week later

than last year.

Still, the broader trend has been encouraging. As layoffs have dwindled, hiring has picked up. Employers added 204,000 jobs last month, indicating that companies were undeterred by the 16-day government shutdown. Private businesses added 212,000 new positions, the most since February.

"If claims can trend at anything like this level through the inevitable noise of Thanksgiving and then the holiday season, that would mark a real improvement on the pre-shutdown period and would be consistent with stronger payroll growth," said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist for Pantheon Macroeconomics, in a client note.

The economy has added an average of 202,000 jobs a month from August through October, up from 146,000 in May through July.

The total number Americans claiming unemployment benefits through the first full week of November was 3.9 million, down from 5.2 million a year ago.

Greater employment typically boosts income, which helps drive more economic growth. Consumers' spending accounts for roughly 70 percent of economic activity.

Still, the unemployment rate remains high at 7.3 percent. That's well above the 5 percent to 6 percent unemployment rate consistent with healthier job markets. When unemployment is lower, workers have more flexibility to change jobs.

Job growth is a major factor for the Federal Reserve in deciding when to reduce its economic stimulus. The Fed has been buying \$85 billion in bonds each month to keep long-term interest rates low and encourage borrowing and spending. □

## American durable-goods orders fall 2%

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Businesses spent less last month on machinery, computers and most other items, lowering orders for U.S. long-lasting factory goods. The decline suggests companies may have been reluctant to invest during the 16-day partial government shutdown. The Commerce Department said Wednesday that orders for durable goods dropped 2 percent in October from September. That follows a 4.1 percent increase in September from August. Durable goods are meant to last at least three years.

Demand for commercial aircraft plunged nearly 16 percent last month, accounting for much of the decline. But orders also fell 1.2 percent in a closely watched category, known as core capital goods, which excludes volatile transportation and defense orders. That was the second straight drop.



In this September 2013 photo, appliances are on display at a Sears store in Berlin, Vt. The Commerce Department reported mixed data on business orders for durable goods in October on Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013.

(AP Photo/Toby Talbot)

Economists pay closer attention to core capital goods because those orders can reflect businesses' confidence in the economy.

Many companies may have held off placing orders in October, awaiting the outcome of a budget

impasse that shut down parts of the federal government.

However, the report conflicts with a private sector survey released earlier this month that showed companies shrugged off the shutdown and boosted orders. □



Conceptis Sudoku



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



4			7			
	9		1	3		
		3			8	
	7		4			1
5				9		7
	6			1		5
		1			2	
			5	8		3
			2			6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

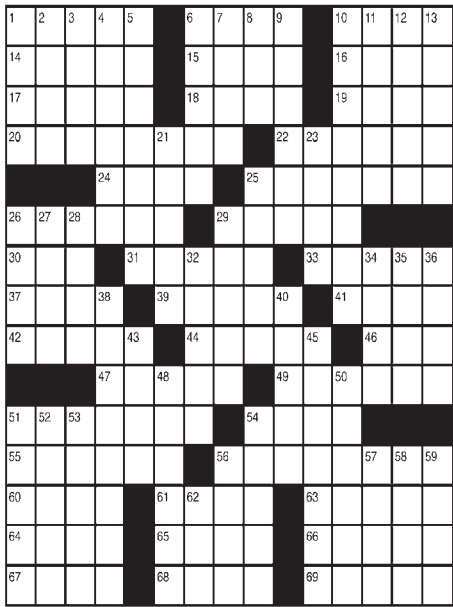
11/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

4	6	9	7	5	3	2	1	8
1	3	2	6	8	9	4	7	5
7	8	5	4	1	2	3	6	9
3	4	1	9	7	8	5	2	6
8	5	7	2	3	6	1	9	4
2	9	6	1	4	5	8	3	7
5	1	8	3	6	7	9	4	2
9	7	4	8	2	1	6	5	3
6	2	3	5	9	4	7	8	1

ACROSS

- 1 Fall flower  
6 Ivan the Terrible's title  
10 Commander of a ship: abbr.  
14 Rent long-term  
15 Roll call response  
16 Canton's state  
17 \_\_\_ off; leaves suddenly  
18 Annoys  
19 Payment to a landlord  
20 Actor in "The Godfather"  
22 Fancy  
24 Largest brass instrument  
25 Liberty  
26 Noisy brawls  
29 Bishop's hat  
30 "\_\_\_ Maria"  
31 Refuse to comply  
33 "Ode to a Nightingale" poet John \_\_\_  
37 As \_\_\_ as the ocean  
39 Schnozes  
41 Urgent; critical  
42 School composition  
44 Up and about  
46 Morning grass blade moisture  
47 Name for a Stooze  
49 Game defeats  
51 Irrigated  
54 Combine, as funds  
55 Chairperson's schedule  
56 Baked Alaska & crème brûlée  
60 Walking stick  
61 Harp of old  
63 Gigger's noise  
64 Smooch  
65 Submissive  
66 Happening  
67 Individuals  
68 Tools with teeth  
69 Browses



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

11/29/13

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

T	O	D	D	S	P	A	S	M	S	H	O	P
A	P	A	R	P	A	R	K	A	P	O	O	L
M	E	N	U	U	T	T	E	R	O	U	Z	O
E	N	S	N	A	R	E	I	G	N	O	R	E
K	I	N	S	N	E	A	K					
E	D	G	E	D	H	I	S	K	E	A	T	S
I	R	O	N	A	I	L	R	E	D	C	A	P
D	A	M	A	L	T	E	R	E	D	O	B	I
E	M	E	R	G	E	N	O	V	C	R	O	C
R	A	R	E	R	I	C	Y	C	A	N	O	E
P	E	A	C	E	G	A	B					
S	U	P	R	E	M	E	R	O	T	A	T	O
T	R	E	E	M	A	C	A	W	R	U	D	E
E	G	G	S	A	G	A	I	N				
M	E	S	S	N	E	R	D	S	T	E	S	T

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11/29/13

- 36 Stitches  
38 Lack of color in the cheeks  
40 Storage towers  
43 Three feet  
45 Farmer's alarm clock?  
48 Kingdoms  
50 Part of a coat  
51 Nutty  
52 Once more  
53 Uptight  
54 Quick glances  
56 Sketched  
57 Ms. Perlman  
58 Take care of  
59 Matching pairs  
62 Truly; verily



## Playing dress-up with your sweats

RUTH LA FERLA

© 2013 New York Times

Who could have predicted a couple of years ago that the homebody sweatshirt would attain high-fashion status? Well, Norma Ka-

to my DNA."

Her second, more ambitious collection, which made its debut at Barneys and on her website this month, arrives as a comelately, alighting amid a

the season."

Indeed, it's safe to suppose that, like biker coats, punk chains and studs and high-end tees, luxury sweats will become fashion evergreens, carrying on indefinitely as emblems of underplayed style.

"Two or four seasons ago, you couldn't have enough white T-shirts," said Ben Matthews, the buying director for Net-a-Porter. "Now people are trading out those tees for a sweatshirt."

For spring, Net-a-Porter has diversified its offerings, adding sweatshirts in leather and lace, and, to satisfy consumers' keenness for over-the-top effects, variations like a sweatshirt by Christopher Kane, one shoulder dripping crystals. Its cost? Just over \$2,500.

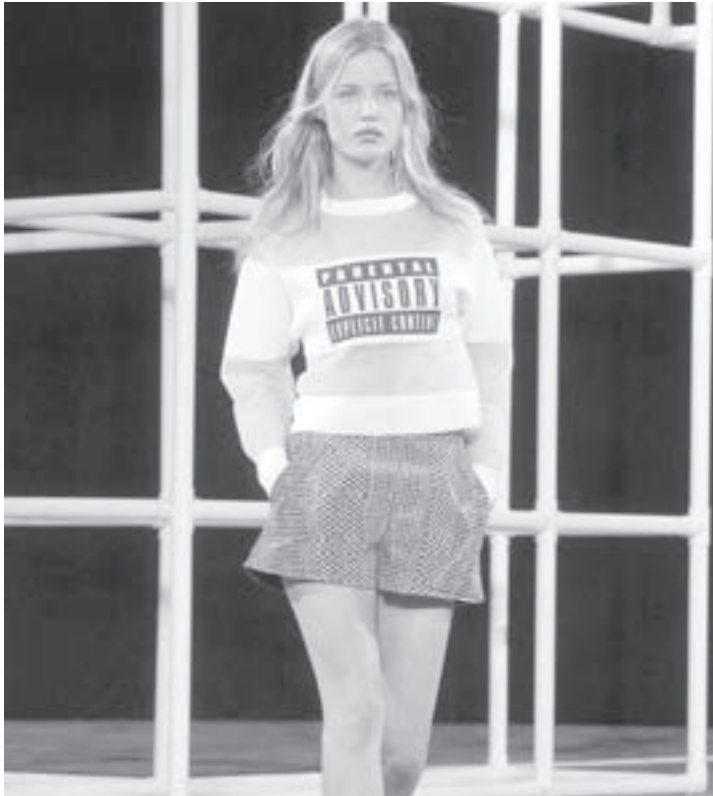
Gym-inspired items introduced for spring include an Alexander Wang crew-neck shirt stamped with a "Parental Advisory" logo, a piece road-tested on a recent outing by Rihanna no less; a giddily patterned silk crew by Prabal Gurung; and marbled silk variations from Peter Som and Phillip Lim. Despite the occasional stratospheric price, sweatshirts, even the most rarefied (they can cost less than \$100 or \$1,200 and more), tend to be considerably less expensive than conventional luxury sportswear.

"These are great pieces for that aspirational customer who wants to buy into a specific brand," said Tomoko Ogura, the senior fashion director at Barneys. Moreover, the look straddles casualness and formality.

"People don't want to look precious," Ogura said. Combining a sweatshirt, with, say, a pencil skirt and pumps "guarantees that you'll look effortless."

It's a nonchalance designers like to think of as modern. And it holds up after hours. Kamali, singling out her sleeveless sweatshirt and matching floor-length skirt, considered its ease.

"This is what the red carpet should look like," she said. □



A model presents a design from Alexander Wang during Mercedes Benz New York Fashion Week, Sept. 7, 2013. Sweats have emerged as a design trend, with a raft of contemporary makers offering up a look.

(NowFashion via The New York Times)

mali, for one. It was, after all, Kamali who in the late 1970s transformed this downtime staple, linked with the locker room and the living room couch, into a fashion trophy.

So it seems only fitting that Kamali has returned to the marketplace with a full-on sweats collection encompassing not just a curve-skimming crew neck, but also leather-paneled sweatshirts, flared skirts, minuscule shorts and a tank top paired with a long trumpet skirt.

Over the years, Kamali has been asked to resurrect her signature terries and fleeces. In fact, she never entirely abandoned them, incorporating sweatshirt fleece jackets, roomy cocoons, blazers and tunics into both her namesake and various secondary lines. But last year, when the designer known as the doyenne of sweats introduced a popular capsule collection for Barneys New York, its success prompted her, she said, "to go back

flurry (no, make that an avalanche) of so-called statement sweats. These fanciful interpretations began surfacing earlier this year, led by runway hits like a Givenchy photo-collage Bambi shirt and a Kenzo shirt with a mystical "lotus" eye. More recently, a raft of contemporary makers, among them Theyskens' Theory and Vince, began injecting this once pedestrian item with a fillip of chic.

The news now is that the look, which emerged rather tentatively as a novelty, has asserted itself as a full-blown trend, one that, as spring approaches, is likely to tighten its grip on shoppers' minds and pocket-books.

"Not since Jennifer Beals danced under a bucket of water in 'Flashdance' has the lowly sweatshirt had so much attention," said Ken Downing, the fashion director of Neiman Marcus. "Next to the biker jacket, the couture sweatshirt is my customers' favorite item of

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apartment at the Divi Dutch  
Village, Sleeps an fully  
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1st week check in 18-19-20 Dec  
2013 and check out 25-26-27  
Dec 2013

2nd week check in 25-26-27  
Dec. 2013 and check out 1-2-3  
jan 2014

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[Doritam5@hotmail.com](mailto:Doritam5@hotmail.com)  
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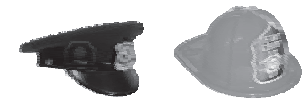


## DOCTOR ON DUTY Oranjestad



Dr. Sneek

## EMERGENCIA 911



POLIS	100
POLIS	581-1100
ORANJESTAD	582-4000
NOORD	587-0009
STA. CRUZ	585-4710
SAVANETA	584-7000
SAN NICOLAS	584-5000
FIRE DEPT.	115
FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
POLIS TIPLINE	11141
HOSPITAL	527-4000
AMBULANCE	582-1234
SAN NICOLAS	
AMBULANCE	584-5050

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S. NICOLAS: San Nicolas Tel: 584-5712

INFORMATION	118
SETAR	582-2116
TAXI	582-5900
TAXI-TAS	587-5900
PROF. TAXI	588-0035
TAXI D.T.S.	587-2300
SERVICE ARUBA	583-3232

## CRUISESHIP

Nov. 28

Carnival Breeze

Adventure of the Seas

Aruba Aiport	524-2424
American Airline	582-2700
Avianca	588-0059
Dutch Antilles	588-1900
Insel Air	588-9314
Jet Blue	588-2244
Spirit Airlines	582-7117
Tiara Air	588-4272
Venezolana	583-7674

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# Comet dances with sun, death; giving mixed signals

**SETH BORENSTEIN**  
AP Science Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Comet ISON is teasing the solar system as it dances with the sun and it's giving astronomers mixed signals.

Will it meet a fiery death — or survive — when it whips around the sun on Thursday? The icy comet will be only about 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away from the sun's super-hot surface during its close encounter on Thanksgiving. On Monday, it looked like it was about to die even before it got there. On Tuesday, it appeared healthy again. "We have never seen a comet like this," Naval Research Laboratory astrophysicist Karl Battams said during a NASA news conference Tuesday. "It has been behaving strangely."

Because it is so close to the sun, ISON will likely not be visible from Earth on Thursday — except via a fleet of NASA telescopes and spacecraft aimed at the comet as it gets closest to the sun at 1:37 p.m. EST (1837 GMT), he said. And it will be a few hours before scientists know whether the comet survives.



In this photo provided by NASA, Comet ISON shines brightly in this image taken on the morning of Nov. 19, 2013.  
Associated Press

But even if the comet dies, Johns Hopkins University scientist Carey Lisse said there's a good chance that people on Earth will get an interesting cosmic show. The comet's remnants could paint the sky with a wide swath of green in the

Northern Hemisphere. Lisse gives the comet a 30 percent chance of surviving, adding that it is just a gut-feeling that has little to do with logic. Logically, it should be 50-50, he said. The comet — two-thirds of a mile (about 1 km) wide

— is made up of loosely packed ice and dirt, essentially a dirty snowball. It is a "dinosaur bone," from the formation of the solar system 4.5 billion years ago, Lisse said. It has been in "deep freeze" for billions of years in the Oort cloud,

a vast area of comets and debris that never formed into planets that's between 450 billion miles (724.17 billion kilometers) and 9 trillion miles (14.4 million kilometers) from the sun, he said. The comet is racing around the sun, pulled close by our star's massive gravity, which can also break apart the dirty icy core.

Comet ISON was first spotted by a Russian telescope in September last year. While many comets come out of the Oort cloud and return after a long trip through the solar system and many comets graze by the sun, this is the first one that astronomers have watched that is from the Oort cloud and is skimming the sun.

Lisse said ISON could behave just like last year's comet Lovejoy, which fell apart a couple days after passing by the sun. Its remnants were visible like "a beautiful paintbrush swath in the sky" in the Southern Hemisphere, he said.

Unlike many blue comets, ISON has been more lime-green because it doesn't seem to have as much carbon monoxide as other comets, Lisse said. □

# Congo's 'forest giraffe' on brink of extinction

**GENEVA (AP)** — The International Union for Conservation of Nature says Congo's national symbol, the okapi, is on the brink of extinction.

The Switzerland-based group says the population of the okapi, also known as the "forest giraffe," has dwindled because of poaching and habitat loss.

IUCN's Red List of endangered species, updated twice a year, rates it as endangered — two steps away from extinction in the wild.

The update published Tuesday also labels the sub-Saharan white-winged flufftail as critically endangered. Just a few hundred birds still survive in Africa.

Meanwhile, the leather-back turtle has benefited from conservation efforts and is now rated vulnerable.

Two albatross species and California's island fox also have recovered.

IUCN says 21,286 of the 71,576 species surveyed are threatened with extinction. □



This is a Thursday, Jan. 22, 2004 file photo of three-month-old okapi baby Lulu, left, looks back under the protection of her 7-year-old mother Layla at "Zoorasia" zoo in Yokohama, southwest of Tokyo.

Associated Press



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# '108 Rock Star Guitars' reveals battle-ax beauty

**KILEY ARMSTRONG**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Sometimes, a picture is worth a thousand songs.

The supersized book "108 Rock Star Guitars" (Glitterati Inc.) demonstrates that six-stringed instruments owned by celebrities and virtuoso sidemen can look as good as they rock.

The 17-year undertaking by photographer Lisa S. Johnson partly benefits the Les Paul Foundation. Paul, the Rock Hall musician-inventor, wrote the foreword before he died.

Not a guitar geek? Don't fret.

Whether you define "pick-up" as a truck, a dating technique or a guitar part, you can revel in the glitz-and-grit world where these prized possessions reside.

The instruments (one's named Baby) evoke tender talk from macho musicians. But some of these battle-ax beauties have seen more action than a roller derby queen: They bear the gashes and sweat stains to prove it.

The author, who grew up in a musical family, underscores musicians' emotional attachment to their instruments.

"I don't believe any serious musician feels that his instrument is an inanimate object," Tom Scholz of the group Boston tells Johnson. Steve Vai, who went solo after playing with Frank Zappa's band, once described his guitar as "the voice of

my heart" in moments of depression, euphoria and "divine love. ... I have cried, screamed, prayed and bled through that instrument."

The book lauds the instrument-makers, called luthiers, and the techs, along with the guitars.

Pawnshop wallflowers blossom

into

caps. — Slash (Velvet Revolver, Guns N' Roses) — cigarette carelessness. As the story goes, the guitarist was "one with the music" while accidentally inflicting a "charred reminder of rock 'n' roll nirvana."

John Rzeznik (Goo Goo Dolls) resurrected a bro-

years after that. Surprisingly, the tone didn't really change; it was a cheap guitar that didn't sound that great to begin with. Haha!" The appreciation of instruments as visual art is an age-old concept.

They "may evoke status, identity, or indicate events — sacred or profane," com-

berus, ancient mythology's three-headed Underworld guard dog.

A double-neck owned by Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen has a quirky folk art feel. Its two-pronged top forms the legs of Nielsen's upside-down caricature. The figure, named Uncle Dick, displays a thumbs-up, but his expression looks maniacal.

When Mom made young Nils Lofgren a Nehru jacket and bell-bottom pants out of drapes, he proudly stuck leftover fabric on his guitar so it matched his new suit.

The book also features a famous, battered Fender Esquire owned by Lofgren's boss, Bruce Springsteen.

Before a Rage Against the Machine performance, Tom Morello scrawled "Arm the Homeless" on his guitar. The jarring jargon co-exists with Morello's drawings of happy hippos. Like most art, it invites interpretation. In Johnson's view, he's contrasting the have-nots and the haves (rotund creatures "gobbling their food").

Willie Nelson's Trigger, named for movie-cowboy Roy Rogers' horse, bears dozens of autographs, including Leon Russell, Roger Miller, Kris Kristofferson, Gene Autry, Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash. Trigger's top is worn clear through; Nelson chooses to leave it that way.

"The two of them," notes the book, "continue to mature together."

Life partners in perfect harmony. □



**This combo made from photos provided by Lisa S. Johnson shows details of guitars belonging to musicians featured in Johnson's new book, "108 Rock Star Guitars." Top row, from left: Willie Nelson's "Trigger," Rick Nielsen of the group Cheap Trick's "Uncle Dick"; and a guitar with scrawled jarring jargon under drawings of happy hippos belonging to Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave's Tom Morello. Bottom row, from left: a guitar from Styx's James J.Y. Young bearing an elaborate carving of Cerberus, ancient mythology's three-headed Underworld guard dog; the "halfcaster" owned by John Rzeznik of the Goo Goo Dolls; and a guitar covered with fake fur, owned by Billy Gibbons of the group ZZ Top.**

**Associated Press**

som into unbridled stardom. There are kaleidoscopic, patriotic and wildcat patterns; gorgeous maple and mahogany; delicate carvings of leaves and acorns; a stuck-on Chinese cookie fortune; python skin; fake fur; little-girl superheroes.

Some seem to revel in musical masochism:

— Zakk Wylde (Ozzy Osbourne Band) — blowtorch burns, hammered-on bottle

ken Stratocaster into a 4-string. The word "OUCH!" is played over its torso; it's now named Halfcaster.

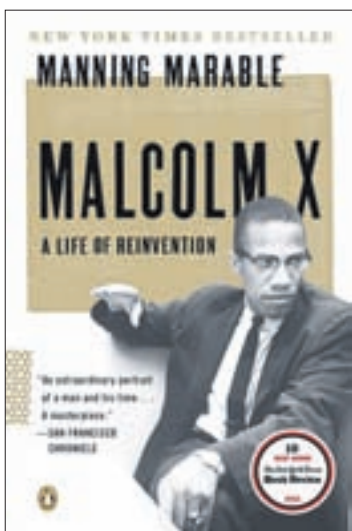
"I was amazed when I threw the guitar in the air and the top portion split right off," Rzeznik recalled via email. "I had my guitar tech take it to a luthier in LA who sanded off the rough edges and fixed the electronics."

"I used it on a song called 'Big Machine' for a couple

ments J. Kenneth Moore, the Frederick P. Rose curator in charge of the Department of Musical Instruments at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. "They become sounding, tangible works of art — telling many stories of the life and times of those who used them," he said.

A guitar owned by James J.Y. Young of Styx bears an elaborate carving of Cer-

## Authors have a few tips for holiday books



**This book cover image released by Viking shows "Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention" by Manning Marable.**

**Associated Press**

**HILLEL ITALIE**

**AP National Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — With more than 100,000 books

published each year, it's hard to know what works best for a holiday gift. A few "experts," from a prize-winning historian to some best-selling children's authors, have suggestions:

James McBride, whose novel "The Good Lord Bird" was this year's fiction winner of the National Book Award: "And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him," by Tomas Rivera. "It's a short group of vignettes," McBride says, "but I like the writing, imagery, voice and story."

Brian Selznick, whose "The Invention of Hugo Cabret" was adapted into a feature film by Martin Scorsese: "Ballad," by Blexbolex.

"This book is unlike anything I've ever seen before," Selznick wrote in a recent email. "It's a puzzle, a fairy tale, an adventure, a love story, made with words and pictures used in a new, utterly beguiling way."

The silk-screened images, made with unbelievable fluorescent ink, will draw you in and will leave you breathless till the end."

Rachel Kushner, author of the acclaimed novel "The Flamethrowers": Manning Marable's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Malcolm X. "I think it's absolutely incredible," she says. "An impeccable work of history about a very impor-

tant American figure."

Alan Taylor, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian whose latest book is "The Internal Enemy," about slavery in colonial and post-colonial Virginia: "A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek," by Ari Kellman, the story of a bloody 1864 battle in Colorado that left more than 150 Native Americans dead and the debate surrounding a memorial site dedicated in 2007. "A book about how different people can remember an event in very different ways," Taylor says. Ann Martin, author of "The Babysitters Club" series: "In the Company of

the Courtesan," by Sarah Dunant. "A mesmerizing story set in 16th-century Venice," Martin says.

Mark Halperin, co-author of "Double Down," the best-seller about the 2012 presidential election: "Monsters: The 1985 Chicago Bears and the Wild Heart of Football," by Rich Cohen. Halperin praises the book's "nostalgia, great storytelling, and larger-than-life characters."

"Goosebumps" author R.L. Stine: "Fun Home," by Alison Bechdel. "This brilliant graphic novel was turned into the best musical theater play I saw all year," Stine says. □



## Demi Moore, Ashton Kutcher finalize divorce



This Jan. 11, 2011 file photo shows cast member Ashton Kutcher, left, and Demi Moore at the premiere for "No Strings Attached" in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher are officially divorced. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Scott Gordon finalized the couple's split on Tuesday, roughly a year after Kutcher sought to end the couple's marriage. Moore and Kutcher were married in September 2005 and the actress announced they had separated in November 2011. The former couple has no children together. During their marriage, they started

a foundation to combat sexual exploitation of girls around the globe. Kutcher stars in "Two and a Half Men" and is currently dating his "That '70s Show" co-star Mila Kunis. Moore starred in 2011's "Margin Call" and appears in the upcoming film "Very Good Girls." She was previously married to Bruce Willis and the pair had three daughters. The judgment was first reported Wednesday by celebrity website TMZ. □

## Hewitt welcomes baby girl after quiet wedding

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Actress Jennifer Love Hewitt and her "The Client List" co-star Brian Hallisay are the proud parents of a baby girl. Hewitt's publicist Sarah Fuller said in an email statement the couple is "thrilled" over Tuesday's birth of Autumn James Hallisay. The couple is also celebrating being newlyweds. Fuller says they were recently married but did not provide further details. "The Client List" was recently canceled by Lifetime after its second season. Hewitt and Hallisay played husband and wife. Us Weekly first reported the news. □



In this July 13, 2013 photo, actress Jennifer Love Hewitt attends Old Navy & Disney's "Mickey Through The Decades" Collection Celebration at Walt Disney Studios, in Burbank, Calif.

Associated Press



In this Sunday, Nov. 10, 2013 photo, actor Idris Elba poses for a portrait at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

## 'Mandela' marks Elba's cinematic maturity

**JESSICA HERNDON**  
AP Film Writer  
**BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)**

— When portraying South African revolutionary Nelson Mandela in the biopic, "Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom," Idris Elba embraced the harsh realities of Mandela's life and was determined to stay in character even when the cameras stopped rolling. But the British actor knew his latest movie wouldn't be believable unless his fellow actors could deliver a performance as raw as his own — so he pushed them to embrace uncomfortable realities, too. Elba recounted one such instance when he was shooting scenes that focused on Mandela's 27 years in jail under white minority rule. During the filming, he sensed that a couple of white actors were struggling to portray the brutality in which Mandela was treated. "They felt bad. ... I could see it in their eyes. I spoke to director (Justin Chadwick) and I said, 'I need these guys to go back to their core. If there is any sense of racism in them I need them to bring it up. If there is a black person that they don't like let me hear

it and feel it,'" said Elba intently, leaning in during a recent interview in a dim Hollywood bar. "That was important because it would come through in the performance and suddenly it becomes the biopic that's safe." Safe would not be the word to describe Mandela the man, or the movie. While it shows him as the genial peacemaker that the world embraced when he was freed from prison and became South Africa's first black president, it also shows him as a fiery and flawed revolutionary who sought to abolish apartheid through any means necessary as leader of the African National Congress. Chadwick called Idris brave and lauded his portrayal of Mandela. "There are not many people who would step into the shoes of Mandela, particularly the way I was making the movie," he said. "There was no room for any untruth. When you are standing in front of thousands of people portraying their leader that they know so well you'd better be on it, and Idris was on it." Elba did not have a chance to speak to the 95-year-old icon because of his fail-

ing health. But he drew on the mannerisms of his late father to help him with his interpretation of Mandela. He also spoke to a few of Mandela's daughters and his second wife, Winnie, who was also a powerful figure in the anti-apartheid movement. "Winnie said it's all good to see a guy who is waving and smiling," said Elba. "But she needed to see the complex man." Based on Mandela's autobiography, the film, which opens Friday, has been in the works for years. Denzel Washington was the original choice for the role. "But at some point the DNA changed and it didn't work for him to do the film, so my name was thrown in that mix," said Elba. "In actuality it was really easy to get the job, but I didn't believe that I had gotten it." Once reality set in, so did Elba's nerves. "I was like, 'Damn, do I have this performance in me?'" the 41-year-old actor said. "Everyone knows what Mandela looks like and sounds like and I'm not like any of that. It was a massive challenge, but it was time to grow up and really put my acting chops out there." □



# Oh, Big Brother!



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN  
© 2013 New York Times

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** - I've never been in a big earthquake, but I know what one feels like now, having spent this past week in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The American-led interim negotiations in Geneva to modestly loosen some sanctions on Iran in return for some curbs on its nuclear program - in advance of talks for an end to sanctions in return for an end to any Iranian bomb-making capability - has hit the Sunni Arab world (and Israel) like a geopolitical earthquake. If and when a deal is struck, it could have a bigger impact on this region than anything since the Camp David peace treaty and Iran's Islamic Revolution in the 1970s combined to reorder the Middle East. Why? When Iran had its Islamic Revolution in 1979, it was, emotionally speaking, like a big brother who walked out, slamming the door behind him. Everyone in the family got used to his being gone. Somebody took his bedroom; somebody else took his bicycle; and everyone enjoyed the undiluted attention and affection of Uncle Sam - for 34 years. Now, just the thought of big brother, Iran, being reintegrated and having its own direct relationship with the United States has set all of America's Sunni Arab allies - Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Egypt and Jordan - on edge, especially at a time when Iran is malignly meddling in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain.

The signs of that nervousness range from the attack on the Iranian Embassy in Beirut last week that killed 23 people to a recent essay in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* newspaper by one of the Arab Gulf's leading journalists, Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed, who wrote: "From a theoretical, political and military perspective, Saudi Arabia will have to protect itself from the Iranian regime's nuclear program, either with a nuclear weapon or via agreements that will maintain the regional balance of power and protect Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states." Yikes. There are so many layers to this: Iran is big - 85 million people; Saudi Arabia is small - 20 million people. Saudi Arabia has the largest oil and gas reserves in the Middle East - and Iran is right behind. If sanctions are fully eased one day, will Iran take market share away from Gulf Arabs? The Arab Gulf is primarily Sunni; Iran is Shiite. The Iranians are developing indigenous nuclear technology; the Sunni Arabs have none. The Geneva talks are exposing the different interests America and its regional allies have vis-à-vis Iran, which the sanctions regime had been masking. All

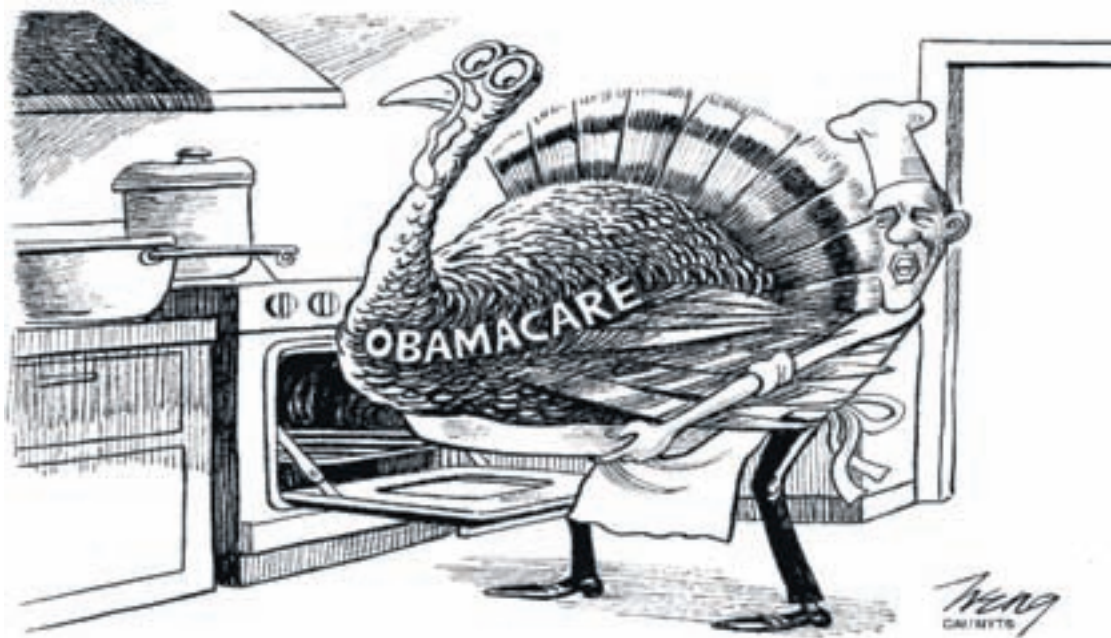
the years of sanctions allowed diverse parties with diverse interests - the U.S., Israel, Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf Arabs, Europe, Russia and China - to "pretend to be having the same discussion about Iran strategy, while disagreeing about the ultimate goal of negotiations and the role that sanctions could play in getting us there or not," notes Daniel Brumberg, a Georgetown University professor and Middle East expert.

If the United States is to maintain its relationships out here, and ensure that the Iran nuclear agreement doesn't fuel more instability, the interim and final deals have to be good ones. Sanctions should only be finally removed if we can impose on Iran a rollback of its enriched fuels and enrichment technologies, along with sufficient intrusive inspections, to make an undetectable Iranian breakout to a nuclear bomb impossible.

But even if the Iranians agree to such a deal, it will be a hard sell to our allies. U.S. officials believe that, ultimately, the only way to defuse an Iranian threat to the region is both to defuse its nuclear program and change the character of the regime, and that the two are related. Unlike our allies here in the Gulf, we believe there is real politics inside Iran and differences within the leadership and between the leadership and the people. But those differences have been largely choked off - and the hard-liners given a monopoly on power - as a result of Iran's isolation from the world. If we can get an airtight nuclear deal that also opens the way for Iran's reintegration into the global economy, U.S. officials hope that different interest groups - including more stakeholders in engagement with the U.S. and the West - will be empowered inside Iran and start to change the character of the regime.

It may not work, but it's a worthy bet, because the only real security for Iran's neighbors can come from an evolutionary change in the character of that regime. So, if Iran's nuclear capabilities are curbed, we can live with that bet on evolutionary change - especially since it would likely facilitate an end to the U.S.-Iran cold war, which has hampered our cooperating on regional issues. Our allies, by contrast, do not trust Iran at all and therefore don't believe in evolutionary change there. They want Iran stripped of all nuclear technology until there is regime change.

We can't close that gap. We can only manage it by being very clear about our goals: to unleash politics inside Iran as much as possible, while leashing its nuclear program as tightly as possible, while continuing to protect our Arab and Israeli allies. That's why, in addition to Secretary of State John Kerry, we may also need a "Secretary of State Just for the Middle East." Because restoring the U.S.-Iran relationship and bringing it in from the cold after 34 years is such a wrenching shock to the Middle East system, it will require daily consultation and hand-holding with all our Arab and Israeli friends. □



## Pigskin Pride And Prejudice



MAUREEN DOWD  
© 2013 New York Times

**WASHINGTON** - I dreamed of Peyton Manning.

In my dream, I was trying to shield him from the bitter wind in Foxborough. But he still looked like a frozen block of ice, with a red nose and watery eyes.

Yet it was so much better than my usual nightmares about President Ted Cruz that I wondered why I hadn't started watching football a long time ago.

When my sports-crazy family would drone on about football at holidays, I would sometimes slip into a bedroom to take a break with Jane Austen.

I had no interest in hearing about sulky brutes cracking heads. When we were children, my brother christened my kittens with the names of Redskins linebackers and slammed their little heads together - until I caught him. I was worried about concussions long before it became a cause célèbre. Kitty-cussions.

Re-reading Austen, I could get lost in a fascinating honeycomb of relationships. I could delve into a rigid male-dominated hierarchical society with pompous wealthy overlords and opportunistic strivers and alluring young protagonists faltering with immature misjudgments and public opprobrium.

Then the Redskins drafted Robert Griffin III, with his gladiator glamour, and I was suddenly a fan, getting irate when my niece's birthday party was scheduled during the Redskins-Cowboys game.

And funnily enough, I was soon getting lost in a fascinating honeycomb of relationships. I was delving into a rigid male-domi-

nated hierarchical society with pompous wealthy overlords and opportunistic strivers and alluring young protagonists faltering with immature misjudgments and public opprobrium.

Austen, the master of tangled sibling dramas, would have appreciated the face-off in September between quarterbacks Peyton and little brother Eli, as their father watched and Peyton wore the 18 jersey in honor of his father and older brother.

Austen would have been amused at last year's Super Bowl between the coaching Harbaugh brothers, especially the moment when John Harbaugh, identifying himself only as "John from Baltimore," phoned into a news conference with his parents to ask, "Is it true that both of you like Jim better than John?"

The 19th-century author of "Emma," the best makeover story ever, would have marveled at the macho makeover saga in Miami with the thuggish Richie Incognito trying to harden the brainy, viola-playing,

Stanford-educated Jonathan Martin - the "bully" and the "baby," as Mike Ditka curtly called them.

The 22-year-old RGIII swept into town like Emma Woodhouse, "handsome, clever and rich," as Austen wrote of her 20-year-old title character, but spoiled by "the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself."

Like Emma and Elizabeth Bennet, RGIII has gone through humbling experiences. His humiliations on the field this season alternated jarringly on TV with his commercials for Subway, concocted when the Heisman winner from Baylor was still flying high and grinning cockily.

He went from being cheered as a magical quarterback and magnetic leader to being belittled as a college-level player and blame-shifter. The Washington Post's Sally Jenkins upbraided RGIII, once hailed as "Cool Hand Luke," for acting like "an unteachable know-it-all." Wide receiver Santana Moss suggested that RGIII, and other teammates, have to not blame others, "have to, at some point, stand up and

say 'me' or 'I.'"

When RGIII kept getting sacked and knocked down Monday playing the San Francisco 49ers, he was left on the ground alone as his linemen walked away without helping him up, as they did last year. The poor guy even got painfully kicked in the groin, or the "wedding tackle" - as it was called on the Mike & Mike show - causing the ref to snicker and a fan to tweet, "Well there goes RG4."

Afterward, Ahmad Brooks, a 49ers linebacker, said that "everybody can see" that RGIII has "the heart of a warrior" but should not be playing, given his tender knee in the bulky brace.

RG3-and-8, as some began calling him mockingly, could not stop miming his disgust at a nonexistent offensive line, a cold father-and-son coaching team who are not sympatico with their star, and the cacophony of critics.

After the game, the quarterback denied an NFL Network report that he did not want the team to review films of his bad plays.

"People are trying to characterize me, and it's unfortunate," a dejected RGIII said, echoing Mike Shanahan. On ESPN, Herm Edwards, a former Kansas City Chiefs coach, talked about RGIII's eroded trust in his coaches using an expression that would fit right into an Austen novel: "There's a stormy romance, to say the least."

Like every compelling and high-spirited Austen heroine, the Redskins' erstwhile hero has some growing up to do. He has to go through the fire, dig deep and learn some lessons about character.

As Anna Quindlen once observed, Austen's novels are about the search for self, and "this search is as surely undertaken in the drawing room making small talk as in the pursuit of a great white whale or the public punishment of adultery." When Elizabeth Bennet mulls her mistakes - the blindness caused by her vanity and the ensuing "just" humiliations - she realizes that these follies have allowed her to finally know herself.

And that search can be undertaken in the locker room as well as in the drawing room. □



# In The End, It's Not About The Food

**COREY MINTZ**

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**TORONTO** - In Canada, where I'm from, Thanksgiving is over already. We celebrated on your Columbus Day, and if it offers any solace as you grow increasingly (or maybe just a little bit) anxious in these final hours, ours turned out fine. We ate pretty much the same things you will cook tomorrow. I'm sure your menu and your meal will be swell. But I am here to argue that it matters less

ping dinner of joy in our attempts to reproduce complicated chef food in our homes.

If I were to offer Thanksgiving advice, it wouldn't be about what kind of bird to buy or which dessert to bake. It would be to remember that you are hosting a version of a dinner party, and that the same etiquette - taking your guests' coats and getting them a drink, making them feel comfortable, feeding them in a timely manner,

on display, the cook's ego is center stage. And that ego demands a chorus of sometimes insincere praise. If you are a guest at such a dinner, it will make you yearn for a simple bowl of spaghetti with tomato sauce and the leisurely pleasure of your friends' company.

The only cooking technique that everyone needs to master is being ready on time. If you've reined in your ambitions and planned a reasonable menu, you'll

have been prepped in advance as much as possible. Ask them about school. Give them a kitchen task. Remind them that they're part of the family.

The care that you show for people in the first moments of their arrival in your home will set the mood for the afternoon or evening. Disregard their comfort and they will begin to worry that they're not going to have a good time. The niceties inspire their confidence.

And you, in turn, should display confidence when serving your banquet.

Every one of those shows where cooking is a sport features a moment when the food is judged. I've seen that scene played out again and again at dinner parties in private homes, with the host expecting the guests to render a verdict of the meal. It makes everyone uncomfortable.

Even worse, I've been served food with the declaration: "It didn't turn out the way it looked in the magazine. I don't think it's good. But tell me what you think." This is the hosting equivalent of "Does this make me look fat?" There is no right answer. Because the question is really: "Will you pander to my insecurity as a cook?"

Even with the uniformity of the Thanksgiving menu, turkey is not free from judgment. Its moistness and the crispness of its skin are scored against all other turkeys ever cooked.

Better to serve it without fanfare or apology. If it's edible, they will eat it. If it's good, you'll hear that in a low-pitched cross between a moan and a yum, elicited without request.

It's more important that you continue to pour water and wine, to remind them that you're looking after their needs.

Thanksgiving is the longest dinner party ever hosted. The most frequent question I get (How do I get people to leave my house?) can be particularly apt. The answer is so simple that many people have trouble believing it.

As long as the meal is over,

it is the hosts' prerogative to end the evening whenever they like. We may think that family trumps this rule, that they should be welcome to stay in our homes as long as they like. But in reality, food and drink make us sleepy. And family grows tiresome.

I often host dinners that go on for five hours. But I've learned to call an end to an evening when it suits me. A good experience that carries on too long, like the ninth season of a sitcom that should have ended in five, sours in memory.

When you are ready to call it a night, just say: "My darling family, thank you. I think it's time to call it a night. I'm having a good time and wish I could stay up later. But I am tuckered out." You may be surprised at the welcome reception for this bit of direction, as previously sleepy guests bolt up and start washing dishes, in an effort to be remembered fondly. Going out on a high note is always better remembered than overstaying your welcome.

I hope my approach to hosting doesn't come across as didactic or officious. It's all intended toward a singular goal: making sure that other people have a good time. I don't care if you put your elbows on the table. I care only that you are happy.

Some people may mistake that for servility. To them I say, I recently hosted a dinner for Charles MacPherson, the operator of a Toronto butler academy.

MacPherson said that when his boyfriend goes to the bathroom in the middle of the night, he makes the bed.

"A desire to serve," he offered, "is the ability to be able to give yourself to someone else to try to make their life better. That doesn't mean subservient. We all serve in some way." The dinner party is an opportunity to serve your friends, if only for one evening. Holidays are a chance to do that for your family. □



**In the end, it's not about the food, a good Thanksgiving host makes guests feel welcome, appreciated and a little special.**

(Katherine Streeter/The New York Times)

than you imagine.

Over the last few years, I've held 201 dinner parties for a newspaper column up here (mine, actually) called Fed. I've learned that the food is less important than the company and a little bit of graciousness. Call it hospitality, or entertaining.

A generation of food television, with its ticking clocks and well-lit close-ups, has brainwashed us into believing dinner is a competition. Our manners have atrophied. We are now willing to put so much thought and effort into what we eat - making cronuts at home, name-checking the latest hot restaurants, leading a torch-and-pitchfork mob against gluten - that we've lost our understanding of how to eat with people.

We have been reduced to a society of boors by strip-

serving food with confidence and ending the evening on a high note - is just as appreciated by your family as by anyone else you would bring to your table. Maybe more.

The focus should be on making your guests feel good. At Thanksgiving, you have two advantages: knowing everyone pretty well and the theme of expressing gratitude. It's a good time to tell your sister not just that she looks great with bangs, but also that you appreciate her watching the kids.

Bottom line: make people feel welcome, appreciated and a little special.

When I'm the host, people are more important than food. And when I'm the guest, I don't really care if the food is bad. That's usually not the case. No matter how much sang-froid is

be prepared when family arrives. Because the second they walk through the door, your guests - not your dinner - need your attention.

Families often lose out on the hospitality we offer to strangers.

But when your cousins come in out of the cold, pumpkin pie in one hand, toddler in the other, they appreciate having someone take their coat. And get them a drink.

Close family members require less ministrations. New family members and boyfriends and girlfriends who aren't yet familiar enough to put their feet up on the sofa may feel less comfortable. They deserve extra attention.

What they need, what we all need, is to feel special, rather than ignored in favor of food that should